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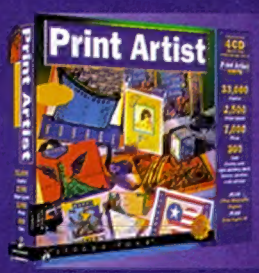

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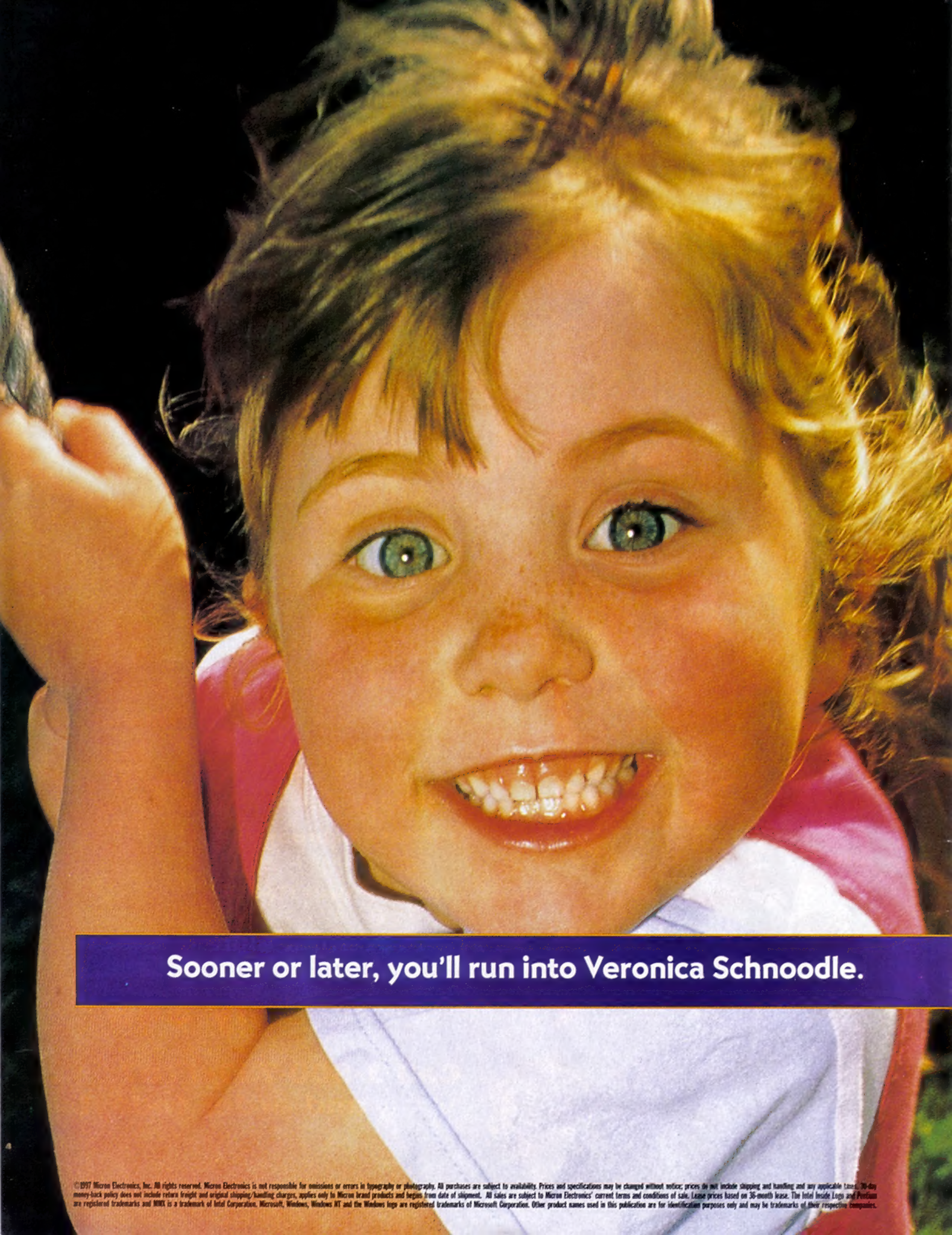

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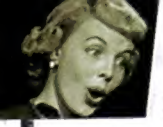

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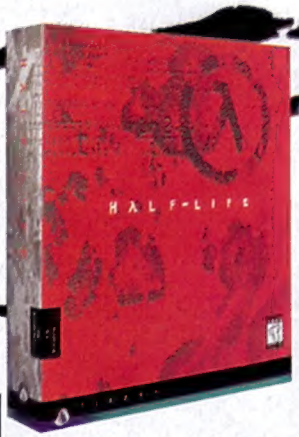

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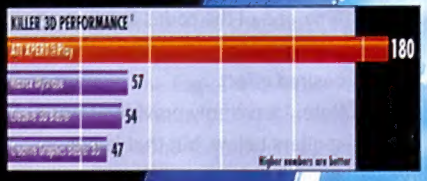

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DVD-Quality Video	•		
2D Acceleration (Win 95)	120M	103M	n/a

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Now You See It.™

ATI

By Bryan Salois

Welcome back to Ask Sierra. Bryan Salois, the answer guy from Sierra's world-famous tech support department, is here to give you straight hints and tips on some of our customers' most frequently asked questions. Stuck and need help with a gaming question? Write us at Ask Sierra, and if Bryan doesn't have the answers, he'll get 'em from his friends in Tech Support. Mail your queries to: InterAction Magazine - Ask Sierra, P.O. Box 53008, Bellevue, WA 98015.

NASCAR Racing 2

Configuring Sound Drivers

Tips for Configuring Sound

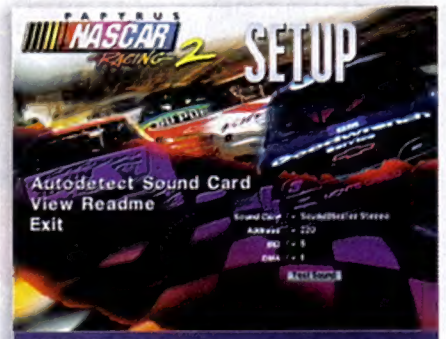
If you don't have sound in *NASCAR Racing 2*, make sure that you have set up the sound by clicking on the Sound Setup button (Windows 95 installation) or running the Setup program (DOS installation).

For Sound Blasters and most Sound Blaster clone sound cards, do the following:

WIN95 Users:
From WIN95, go to Start, Programs, Sierra, and select *NASCAR Racing 2* Sound Setup. At this setup screen, manually select Sound Blaster Stereo A220 I5 D1. Then select Test Sound. If you hear the sound test, then select Exit. If your Sound Blaster sound card is set to a Port Address, IRQ, or DMA other than the standard A220, I5 and D1, you may not pass the sound test. Consult your sound card manual for instructions on how to set your sound card to the proper settings.

DOS Mode Users:
From a DOS prompt, type CD/NASCAR2 ⟵Enter⟶. Then type SETUP ⟵Enter⟶. Next, manually select Sound Blaster Stereo A220 I5 D1. Select Test Sound. If your Sound Blaster sound card is set to a Port Address, IRQ, or DMA other than the standard A220, I5 and D1, you may not pass the sound test. Consult your sound card manual for instructions on how to set your sound card to the proper settings.

Note: If you have a Windows 95-only sound card, you must contact the sound card manufacturer to determine if that card may be modified to be used in DOS.



NASCAR Racing 2 sound setup screen

Betrayal In Antara

Hints & Tips

Tip 1: Keep Your Party Alive!
Carry lots of Senwater whenever possible, and use it to heal your party members. Since Aren is very weak in the beginning of the game, it's best to keep him (and any other character facing immediate death) out of your enemies' Zone of Control. Try to keep the other characters between the monsters and Aren. Finally, don't be afraid to camp. There are no time-critical quests in Antara, so take advantage of camping, and do it often so your party can heal.

Tip 2: The Finer Points of Combat (i.e., How to Kick Some Butt)
Gang up on a single opponent, and focus your strategic attacks on that opponent until he/she/it is eliminated. Don't just wound several opponents and let them counterattack. Striking and wounding an opponent can lessen their ability to counter-attack, so try to get the first attack in whenever possible. If your opponents don't have ranged attacks, sit back and wait for them to advance before moving in for the kill. Using ranged attacks like arrows and spells make this doubly effective. Lastly, keep your party together. If you and your companions get separated in combat, they become easy targets for multiple attackers.

Food spoiling? Drop it on a dead guy.

Tip 3: Food Spoiling? Check This Out! (Ssh! This Is a Special "Sierra Exclusive" Tip!)
In *Antara* food spoils in five days if it is not used. However, if you take your food supplies and place them on a dead body, this resets the spoilage clock, even if you've already carried the food for four days!

Tip 4: Pssst! Here's a Few Spoilers Just in Case...
During a normal game, press CTRL+SHIFT+Z. A small, black text box will pop up on screen. Type one of the codes below, and press Enter to achieve the desired effect.
Note: I have only provided three spoilers below, but that is not all of them!

- "Man does my leg hurt"—Heals the entire party
- "Some call me Tim"—Kills all opponents (only works in combat)
- "Ask for a glass of water"—Teleports the party to the starting location for the chapter

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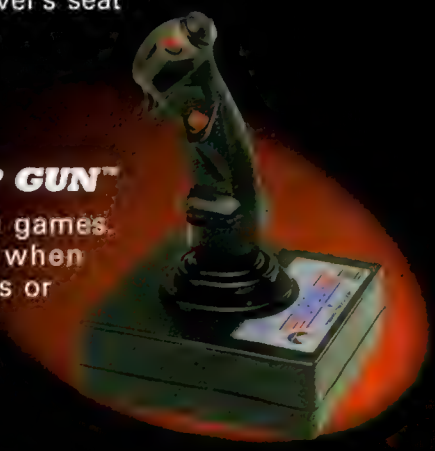

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Shivers Two: A Harvest of Souls

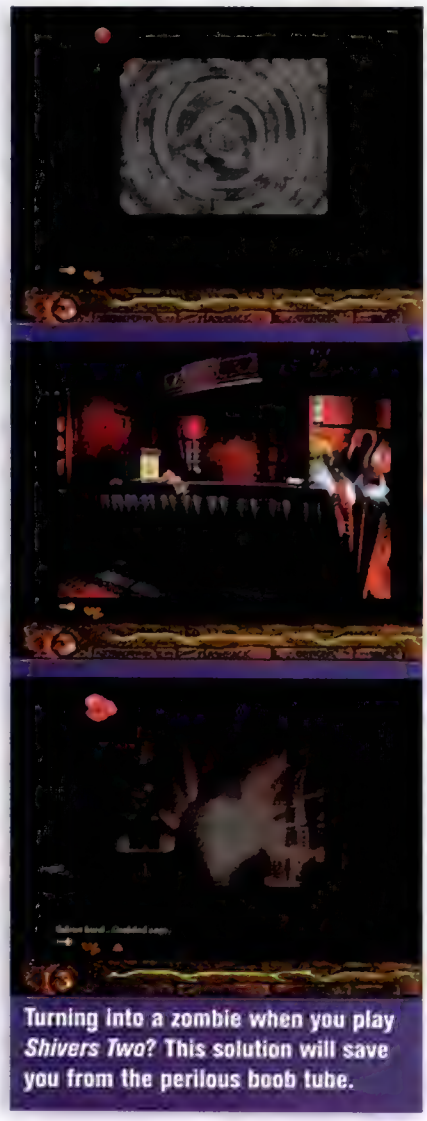
Hints & Tips

Shivers Two is an adventure/puzzle game, so I decided to offer information on some of the most commonly asked questions about the puzzles in it. You have a choice between Tips and Spoilers. If you want help, but don't want the full solution, read only the Tip. If you want the full answer, read the Spoilers.

Tip 1: *Why does the TV seem to be hypnotizing me? Why do I find myself dazed and wandering around, only to end up in the parking lot?*

It could have something to do with the strange red light on the TV. Check the hotel lobby for something to stick over the red light before you watch a video.

Spoiler 1: The music videos contain important clues to the puzzles in the game. In order to watch the video and understand them, you need to cover the red dot in the corner of the TV before you turn it on. After you check in, return to the lobby of the hotel. Take the giant pieces of gum from the ashtray on the counter, and use them to cover the red dot on the TV. Also, we recommend you turn on the captioning feature in the game to better understand the lyrics in the music videos. You can turn this on by selecting Options, then Configuration, and checking the circle for Captions.



Turning into a zombie when you play *Shivers Two*? This solution will save you from the perilous boob tube.

Tip 2: *How and where do I get the chess pieces?*

A clue to the placement of the pieces is found in Olivia's notebook in the warehouse.

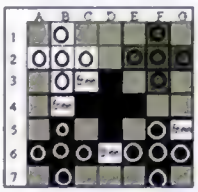
Spoiler 2: You must find four chess pieces to place on the chessboard. If you want to know exactly where the puzzle pieces are found and where they are placed on the keyboard, here is the list: (1) The White King is found in the jail cell. It will be placed in position C-1. (2) The White Knight is found in Pearl Larsen's bedroom in the toucan's mouth. It will be placed at position C-2. (3) The Black King is found in motel room 6 in the dresser drawer. It will be placed at position A-1. (4) The Black Pawn is found in the library card catalog under the letter "P." It will be placed in position A-2.

The infamous colored ball puzzle

Tip 3: *How do I solve the blasted colored ball puzzle?*

This puzzle reminded me of the Chinese checker puzzle from the first *Shivers* game: addictive, simple to play, but complex to solve. I have provided one of the possible solutions below, but unless you're on the verge of pulling out your hair over it, I'd recommend giving the puzzle a try before giving up and using this spoiler.

Spoiler 3: First, number your playing board like the diagram printed below, with A through G across the top and 1 through 7 down the side. Then, move the pieces from the space listed to the following space.



Playing board diagram

Colored Ball Puzzle Solution

1.	F7-C7	25. (FREE)	B2-B4
2. (FREE)	G2-G5	26.	B4-C4
3.	B1-E1	27.	B5-B3
4. (FREE)	A6-A3	28.	B3-G3
5.	C4-A4	29. (FREE)	A4-B4
6.	D5-D7	30.	B4-B1
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11.	D6-D2	35.	D2-D3
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	Mechwarrior 2: Battle Pack WIN '95, Pentium, 16mb, J	Arcade Style	5108501
NEW	**Reader Rabbit 1: Deluxe** WIN3.1/WC 386/25 or MAC 68030, 8mb	Children's Ed.	5110705
	Lords Of The Realm II DOS/WC 486/66, 8mb	Strategy Game	5102108
NEW	**The Jenny Craig Cookbook** WIN3.1/WC 486/33, 8mb or MAC 68040, 4mb	Home/Personal	5118708
NEW	**Front Page Sports: Golf With Coeur D'Alene** WIN '95, Pentium, 16mb	Sports	5117106
	Pod (MMX compatible) WIN '95, Pent120, 16mb	Arcade Style	5108709
NEW	**Rebel Moon Rising** WIN '95, Pentium, 16mb	Arcade Style	5117007
	Mechwarrior 2 Mercenaries DOS/WC 486/66, 8mb, J	Arcade Style	5091905
	Command And Conquer DOS/WC 486/66, 8mb or MAC 68040, 16mb	Strategy Game	5050208
	Jumpstart First Grade WIN3.1/WC 486, 4mb or MAC 68040, 8mb	Children's Ed.	5045901
	Jumpstart Kindergarten WIN3.1/WC 486, 1mb or MAC 68040, 4mb	Children's Ed.	5027701
	The 7th Guest DOS/WC 386 or MAC LCIII, 4mb	Interact. Game	5004709
	Earthsiege 2 WIN '95, 486, 8mb, J	Arcade Style	5080700
	Phantasmagoria DOS/WIN3.1/WC 486/66 or MAC 68040, 8mb	Interact. Game	5004502
	The 11th Hour DOS/WC 486/66, 8mb	Interact. Game	5054309
	Nickelodeon: Director's Lab WIN3.1 486, 8mb	Children's Enter.	5081005
	Indycar Racing II DOS 486/66, 8mb or MAC PMAC, 16mb	Driving Sim.	5083308
	Floorplan Plus 3D WIN3.1/WC 386, 4mb	Home/Personal	5084702
	Command Aces Of The Deep WIN '95, 486/33, 8mb	Strategy Game	5080809
	Masterclips 35,000 Premium Image Collection WIN3.1/WC 386, 4mb, P	Clip-Art Library	5084801
NEW	**Math Rabbit** WIN3.1/WC 386/25 or MAC 68030, 8mb	Children's Ed.	5110309
	Print Artist 4.0 WIN3.1/WC 486/33 or MAC 68030, 8mb, P	Home/Personal	5089305
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	Flying Corps DOS/WC Pent90, 16mb, J	Flight Sim.	5105606
NEW	**Logic Quest** WIN3.1/WC Pentium, 8mb	Children's Ed.	5110200
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	Silent Thunder: A-10 Tank Killer 2 WIN '95, 486/66, 8mb, J	Flight Sim.	5080908
	The Oregon Trail II WIN3.1/WC 486, 8mb or MAC 68030, 5mb	Children's Ed.	5078308
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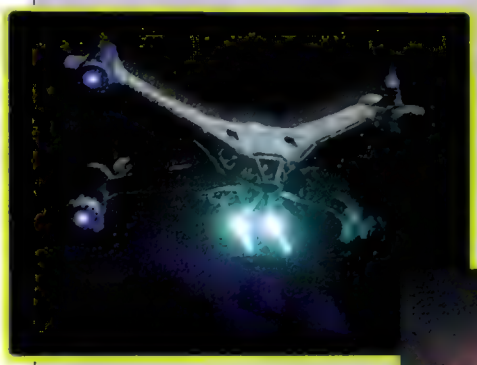
$25,000* INTERNET TREASURE HUNT GOES LIVE

Can you reveal the secret behind the ***Mask of Eternity***? Now, through an innovative new Internet-based treasure hunt, you can win valuable prizes worth, in total, over $25,000. We're talking multimedia PCs, vacations, games...you may even find yourself the owner of a brand new 1998 automobile. Our virtual, global hunt runs August through October. To register and play, simply tune your Web browser to **www.sierra.com/mask**. It's easy, and the earlier you register, the better your chance of winning. Your goal is to recover the pieces of the shattered gold mask hidden throughout the World Wide Web and understand the truth behind the *Mask of Eternity*. Complete contest rules, sponsors, and prizes can be found at **www.sierra.com/mask**. Remember, time is of the essence. Your treasure awaits!

*$25,000 total value based on projected sponsor and prize list at time of printing. Final prize value may change.

Babylon 5: Exploding Soon Into Your PC's Universe



Sierra's Oakhurst facility, where the game is in production.

Babylon 5 the game will feature single and multiplayer action and historical simulation modes.

Sierra On-Line and Warner Bros. to Co-Produce Babylon 5 Games

SIERRA AND WARNER Bros. have inked an exclusive multiyear, multigame licensing agreement to produce PC space combat simulation and adventure games based on the hit TV series *Babylon 5*.

"We intend to produce the best space combat sim in the gaming industry with one of the most popular science-fiction shows on TV," emphasizes Craig Alexander, general manager at

For those who don't watch a lot of TV, *Babylon 5* is the popular TV series set in the year 2261 aboard a United Nations-like space station. The crew deals with alien races constantly at war, a corrupt government on Earth (there are some things time can't change), and the forces of Chaos.

The first game, *Babylon 5*, a space combat sim, is slated to hit retail shelves next summer. **www.sierra.com/babylon5**

Sierra Wins Big at E3

AT THE ELECTRONIC Entertainment Expo in Atlanta this past June, two of Sierra's newest family members walked away with two very coveted awards.

The much talked about ***Half-Life***, from independent developer Valve Software, went home with *Gamepen*'s Best Action Game of E3 award, beating out such industry heavyweights as Activision's *Quake 2* and *Hexen 2*. Berkeley Systems—no strangers to winning awards—smoothly made off with *Gamepen*'s Best Puzzle/Trivia Game of E3 award for their outrageously funny ***YOU DON'T KNOW JACK TV***. *Gamepen*'s Best of E3 awards are determined by a panel of media members from a number of print and online PC magazines.

Be sure to check out all of Berkeley's products at **www.sierra.com/trivia** and don't miss our feature story on the entire *YOU DON'T KNOW JACK* series on page 65.

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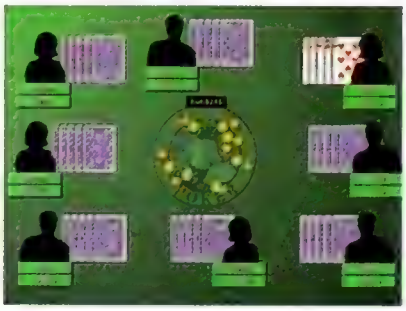
HOYLE POKER Contest Results

SOME PEOPLE ARE good at cards and, well, some aren't. Experts and novices alike were invited to join the developers of ***Hoyle Poker*** for a few friendly Friday-night games. When all was said and done, some people definitely stood out.

First-place winners who won four Sierra games include John Swinford, Wayne Wilson, David Loflin, and William Lutton.



Second-place finishers, winning two Sierra games each, are Bill Weldon, Al Long, Ed Pizio, and Terry Moore. Coming in third and winning one Sierra game each were George and Sylvia Tompsett, William Pierson, Mat Bess, Jason Shivers, and two players known only as Diane and Anthony.

For a complete list of all winners, please send a self-addressed envelope to Hoyle Friday-Night Poker, Sierra On-Line, 3380 146th Pl. SE, Ste. 300, Bellevue, WA 98007.

Power Chess **vs.** Kasparov **vs.** Deep Blue

FROM MAY 3 to 11, 1997, we held a Guess the Move Contest in conjunction with the Deep Blue v. Kasparov chess match. Contestants had to make a series of guesses on who (the human or the computer) would win the game, what the last piece moved would be, and what square the last piece would be moved onto. They were also asked to guess the color of the last piece moved, and how many moves would be needed to win. Finally, they were asked to answer a few trivia questions.

The winners for Games 1 and 2 are Bryan Chambers and Bill Wall, respectively. Game 3 had a tie between Komputer Korner and Bob Brehm. Games 4 and 5 had Barry Schmidt and Jonathan Reid, respectively, as the top finishers, and Game 6 had a tie between David Boren and Mae Phillips. Congratulations to all the winners.

Print Artist Contest Results

A COUPLE ISSUES ago, we sent out a call for the most unusual, original ***Print Artist*** layouts. We were inundated with impressive entries, so our decisions were difficult. First-place winners Helen Poelker, Larry Shaw, Lisa Rene Stevens, Pat Audinet, and Piper Schofield each won the entire *Sierra Home Collection*, including ***MasterCook Deluxe 4.0***, ***Cooking Light 4.0***, ***The Jenny Craig Cookbook***, ***CustomHome***, ***LandDesigner 3D***, and ***Print Artist 4.0***. For a complete list of winners, please write to *Print Artist* Layout Contest Results, Sierra On-Line, 3380 146th Pl. SE, Suite 300, Bellevue, WA 98007.

Win PCs, Pizzas & Products

WANT YOUR GAME and pizza too? It seemed only logical to collaborate with Red Baron Pizza to promote the new release of ***Red Baron II***. So we decided to hold a sweepstakes. Between August 25 and December 31, 1997, sweepstakes game pieces can be found in 10 million 12-inch-pizza boxes. Five first-prize winners will take home the Ultimate PC—a Pentium 200, valued at about $3,500. Second place gets one free year (30 vouchers) of Red Baron Pizza. Third-place winners get free copies of the much-awaited *Red Baron II*. And there's an added bonus—all of the boxes will have a coupon for $10 off a copy of *Red Baron II*. No purchase is necessary. For a free game piece, mail a 3.5 x 5 card with your name and address to: Aim to Win With the Baron Game Piece Request, PO Box 5217, Stacy, MN 55078-5217. All requests must be mailed by January 2, 1998, and received by January 8, 1998.

Please Help Us Welcome Our Newest Family Member

THE SIERRA FAMILY keeps growing. The latest company to join the fold is Books That Work, the Palo Alto, California company famous for developing excellent home and garden productivity software.

Co-founders Dan Levin and Stuart Gannes, a former editor for Time Inc., started Books That Work with the directive of bringing the interactivity of computers into the successful "How-To" book experience and providing users with a unique and valuable "new media" experience. Gannes explains, "In print you can tell people exactly how to do things. But with computer software, you can tell them exactly how to do things and let them experiment and visualize their ideas and plans in full-motion 3D. You can't do that in print."

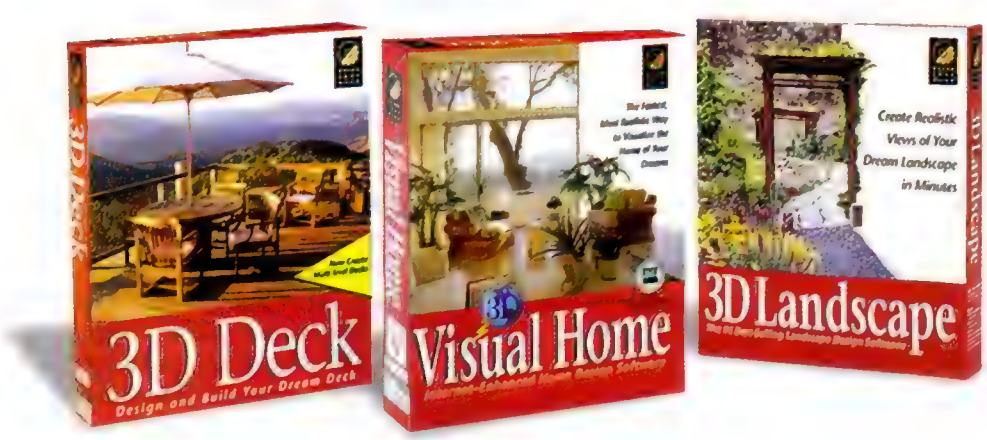
Gannes, who is often regarded as an industry visionary, saw a great opportunity to join his forces with Sierra Home. "I really believe that the home productivity market will become more consolidated. Consumers will be better served by fewer companies focusing on developing stronger, even more comprehensive titles. By Christmas, with the addition of the BTW titles, Sierra Home will offer the most extensive home productivity lineup available. No one'll even come close," he concludes.

Sierra CompleteHome will be the first title released under the Sierra Home brand. Coming this fall, *Sierra CompleteHome* is a comprehensive suite of home products, including ***Sierra Home Architect***, ***3D Deck***, ***Home Improvement Encyclopedia***, and ***Get Wired***, an electrical wiring how-to guide and simulation. Also included is a free three-month membership to the *CompleteHome* club that rewards you with thousands of dollars in savings on home projects, remodels, tools, and services. A $200 value, *Sierra CompleteHome* offers everything you need to improve, plan, decorate, and maintain your home.

Sierra has teamed up with Books That Work to bring you a new collection of "How-To" titles. BTW co-founder Stuart Gannes, pictured here, brings his Time Inc. experience to Sierra.

But what is it that's so appealing about home productivity software? According to Gannes, it is a combination of many factors. "When you play any game, you can only interact and exist in a predetermined 3D environment. When you use home productivity titles like ours, you have the power to actually create and manipulate the environment any way you like."

Check up on all the Books That Work titles on the Sierra website at: **www.sierra.com/sierrahome/productivity.**



"the best computer game ever invented– period!"

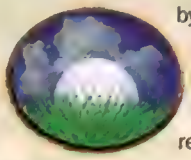
– The Computer Answer Guy

Congratulations 3rd Place in the 1997 U.S. Open Tom Lehman!

Front Page Sports: Golf—

This Rookie Is a First-Class Contender

Like the phenomenal Tom Lehman, *FPS: Golf* is making a name for itself in the world of golf. A hit with computer sport sim gamers across the country, it is already on its way to Hall of Fame status. Just ask The Computer Answer Guy! Thousands are enjoying the realism of **TrueSwing™** technology and rediscovering the joy of computer golf. They're playing PC golf as it was meant to be played — with realism and just a bit of frustration to make it even more like the game you love to hate. Designed by Vance Cook, the father of modern golf games, *FPS: Golf* is exactly what your computer needs to revitalize your game.



Order Online @ www.sierra.com/golf/

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The Exceptional Black Diamond Ranch Course Is Coming to *FPS: Golf*

Now play *FPS: Golf* on the #1 rated golf course in Florida, world-renowned Black Diamond Ranch Golf and Country Club. Nestled in Florida's Nature Coast, Black Diamond offers an 18 hole Quarry championship course. Five dramatic signature holes hug the rim of two retired quarries. Challenging 100-foot vertical drops, stunning vistas of rolling hills and the serene beauty of Black Diamond Lake add another dimension to this golfing experience. Call 1-800-757-7707 to order the *FPS: Golf, Black Diamond Ranch* add-on course today.

Beautiful vistas await you on the fairway at the 14th hole at stunning Black Diamond Ranch.

Coming Soon... The First Annual Sierra Open!

Following in the time-honored tradition of the Masters and the U.S. Open, Sierra On-Line will host the first annual Sierra Internet Golf Tournament in the Spring of 1998. The Sierra Open will be the first computer golf tournament to feature the TrueSwing™ technology, found exclusively in *Front Page Sports: Golf.* It will take skill, a little luck and dedication to the game to bring home this trophy. In the coming months, perfect your TrueSwing™ skills playing against friends and other computer golf enthusiasts on Sierra's FREE Internet gaming system. Simply choose Internet from the game selection screen in your *FPS:Golf* game. Practice tournaments begin this Fall, with the Sierra Open in early Spring 1998. Check out the Sierra website (**www.sierra.com/titles/golf/site**) for complete tournament rules and details. We will regularly update the *FPS: Golf* site with full course information, tour plans, and maybe even a tip or two that will help you compete successfully for cash and prizes in the $100,000 Sierra Open.

$100,000 in cash and prizes!

Master the rough and sandtraps on the 15th hole at Black Diamond Ranch on Florida's Nature Coast.

The 1998 Sierra Open will be subject to all applicable federal and state laws. Sierra reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to modify this contest in any manner whatsoever (including, but not limited to, contest prize amounts, contest rules, contest start date, etc.) as well as the right to cancel this contest for any reason. All entries for the 1998 Sierra Open must be received no later than December 31, 1997.

Order Now 1-800-757-7707

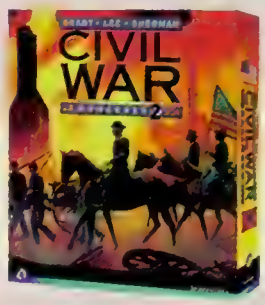
WAR IS HELL.

(ALTHOUGH WITH THE RIGHT GAME, IT'S ALSO SORT OF FUN.)

How do you outgun a great game like *Robert E. Lee: Civil War General*? With *Civil War Generals II* you can now command Confederate or Union Armies. And you can put yourself in the boots of Lee, Grant, or Sherman as you attempt to rewrite history.

Civil War Generals II comes combat-ready with 40 legendary battles from both the Eastern and Western theatres. But if you want to wage your own wars, use the map editor to create terrain, armies, and commanders. Then go online to test your cunning in head-to-head battles.

This war isn't just hell. It's history. And you'll experience it as never before with an insightful new collection of Mort Künstler paintings and all-new multimedia mini-documentaries on the men, weapons, and tactics of the Civil War.



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By Kevin M. Lamb

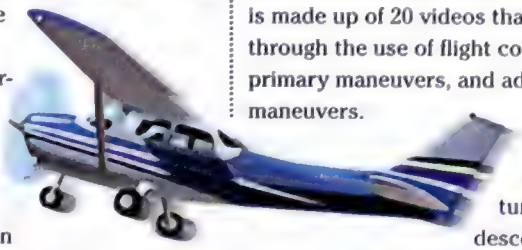
SO, YOU WANT to be a pilot? Or maybe you're already licensed, and it's time for a flight review? Regardless of your status, the process of learning to fly or remaining current is an arduous undertaking, to say the least.

To even qualify as a student pilot, certain age, language proficiency, and medical fitness requirements must be met. Then, 16 hours of flying time, on average, are required before the student pilot takes his or her first solo flight. While logging these hours, student pilots must study volumes of information about flight maneuver fundamentals, flight physics, radio communications, navigational aids, weather patterns and types, and aircraft instrumentation and characteristics, to name just a few subjects. These requirements alone make a good argument for using *Sierra Pro Pilot* as a valuable study aid. But there's more—much more.

Sierra Pro Pilot is a flight simulation that's as entertaining for the nonpilot to fly as it is educational for the student and experienced pilot. *Sierra Pro Pilot* is the brainchild of flight sim designer Mark Pechnick and his team from subLOGIC, the company that Sierra On-Line acquired in November 1995 in its quest to become the leader in the

"Most of the navigation methods are covered, including NDB, VOR, DME, GPS, radar, and good old-fashioned dead reckoning."

flight simulation field. subLOGIC was eventually blended with Dynamix in Eugene, Oregon, now considered "flight sim central" for the company.



Pechnick has heralded the instructional aspect of the sim as "a hundred times more thorough than anything else on the market." Indeed, with a library of flight instruction .AVIs, a custom flight instruction (print) manual, an extensive online manual, and right-click pop-up help, any pilot will find plenty to learn from *Sierra Pro Pilot*. You can also complete any one of 20 different flight assignments, some even accompanied by a flight instructor, on your way to logging simulated hours for your ProPilot certificate.

Virtual Flight Instructor

Perhaps the most valuable component of *Sierra Pro Pilot* is the Virtual Flight Instructor, the instructional video library, which is available from anywhere within the sim. Up for the first time and need to know how to land? Just bring up the video for the procedures to conduct during a normal landing. Or you may find yourself out on a dual with *Sierra Pro Pilot*'s Flight Instructor, who wants you to execute a power-off stall. For a quick review, pop up the video that demonstrates the control positions and speeds necessary to successfully complete this maneuver.

The video library is composed of three courses: Private, Commercial, and Instrument. The Private Course alone is made up of 20 videos that take you through the use of flight controls, primary maneuvers, and advanced maneuvers. Takeoffs, landings, turns, climbs, descents, stalls, traffic patterns, final approaches, slow flight, and straight and level flight are all covered in exquisite detail.

The Instrument Course includes six videos (.AVIs) and covers topics such as scanning (instrument) techniques, tracking a VOR (VHF Omnidirectional Radio) or NDB (Non-Directional Beacon), and basic maneuvers using instrument references. And the Commercial Course, also consisting of three .AVIs, covers Chandelles, Lazy Eights, and Eights on Pylons.

> **"Each one (.AVI video) includes high-resolution scenery and the same beautifully crafted, three-dimensional aircraft models found in the sim..."**

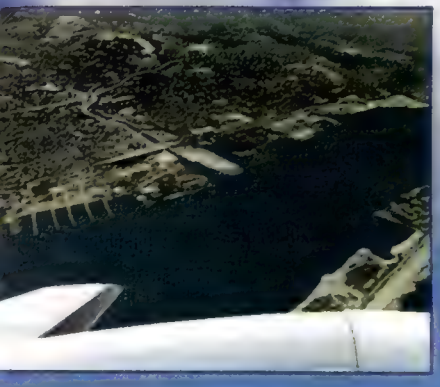
Each .AVI is narrated to focus on the most salient points of the lesson. Inset windows are used to demonstrate the various aircraft control movements, such as the proper rudder pedal and yoke positions for a medium-bank, constant-altitude turn. As the main window shows the airplane beginning the turn, the corresponding rudder pedal and yoke positions are displayed in the insets. Instrument readings, where applicable, are also displayed to correspond with the aircraft movements. This visual, screen-within-a-screen approach demonstrates the maneuvers in a unique way that makes learning not only faster but more enjoyable.

The .AVI scripts were written by Bill Mayhew, a certified flight instructor. Each one includes high-resolution scenery and the same beautifully crafted, 3D aircraft models found in the sim, all of which makes for a video that's as smooth as a well-executed Lazy Eight.

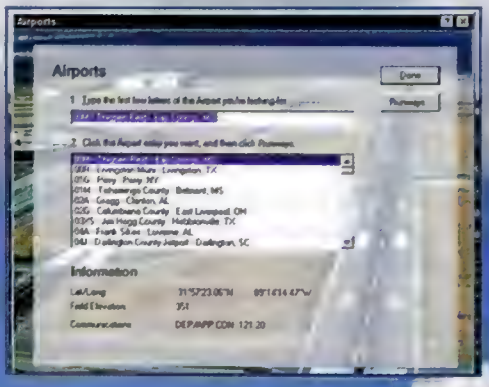
Copilot Assistant

The Virtual Flight Instructor is a valuable program within a program. But it comprises only a third of the training available within *Sierra Pro Pilot*. The co-pilot assistant, an onboard flight instructor, carries most of the teaching load.

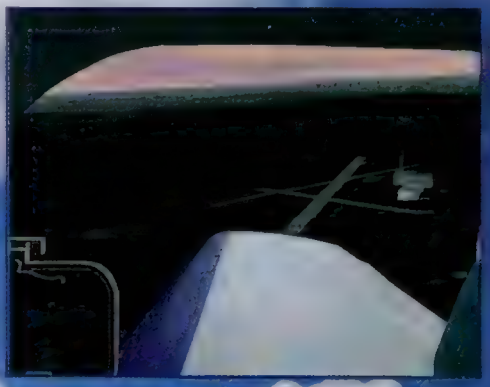
Regardless of the flight plan, any pilot can hire a flight instructor in *Sierra Pro Pilot* at no extra charge. The program coordinates the instructor's comments with the directions provided by air traffic control (ATC). For example, if



Fly over 29 metropolitan areas re-created from aerial photographs.



Includes over 3,000 airports throughout the United States.



Practice landing and takeoff maneuvers with *Pro Pilot*'s Certified Flight Instructor.

you're instructed by departure control to climb to an altitude of 800 feet after takeoff and then turn to a heading of 280 degrees, your instructor will give you a few verbal reminders about what's expected. Make one too many errors, and he'll take command of the plane.

Several flight assignments include dual cross-countries. Because "dual" means you and the instructor are in the plane at the same time, he'll be there with his clipboard evaluating your performance and providing verbal prompts every step of the way.

Flight Assignments

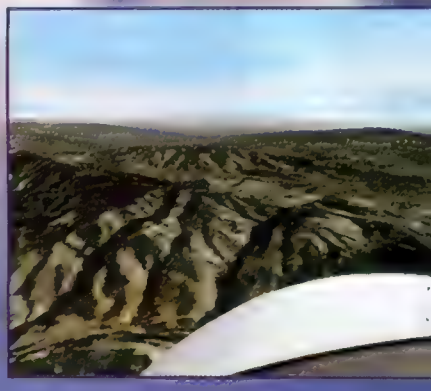
Pilots who are studying for a particular certificate or rating are required to log hours under a variety of conditions and in a variety of aircraft. For instance, private pilots must log 40 total hours, instrument pilots must log 125 total flight hours, and commercial pilots must log 250 total flight hours. Certain hours are required in cross-country flight. Others involve takeoffs and landings at an airport with an operating control tower. Still other logged hours that qualify for certain certificates involve flight with an instructor or solo, or under Visual Flight Rules or Instrument Flight Rules.

The print manual for *Sierra Pro Pilot* has a chapter that covers 20 different flight assignments, each designed to help pilots log simulated hours. The flight plans for each assignment are modeled within the simulation. Plans are accessed and loaded from the pop-up menu and each one corresponds exactly to the outline provided in the manual. For instance, if an assignment requires a night flight from Los Angeles to San Diego in a multi-engine aircraft, then once that flight plan is loaded, you'll find yourself in the cockpit of a Beechcraft Baron B58 staring down the centerline of runway 25L at LAX, ready for takeoff. And, once in the air, the lights of Southern California will twinkle below. These lights, by the way, include all the actual lighting aids located at each airport.

If the flight is accompanied by an onboard instructor, you will hear his voice, along with the appropriate controller (Ground, Departure, or Tower), guiding you along the way. If the flight is solo, you'll only have the print flight

30 tutorial videos instruct you through private, instrument, and commercial training.

***Pro Pilot* features visual and instrument instruction for VFR and IFR conditions.**



Geographic landmarks, mountains, and cities make for unsurpassed realism.

assignment to outline your flight plan; then it's up to you to adhere to it. Your performance will be evaluated after each flight assignment is completed, and your hours will be logged accordingly in an online logbook.

"One of the main goals in creating the assignments was to keep them interesting and to provide unique challenges to pilots of all levels," Pechnick says. But most flight instruction deals with the fundamentals and basic decision-making. So Pechnick hired Wally Anderson, an instrument-rated pilot with 450 logged hours, who also happens to be a member of, and a technical consultant to, the Experimental Aircraft Association. Anderson came up with situations which test a pilot's judgment ability. In one assignment, designed to log Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) cross-country hours, the flight plan includes an unexpected weather diversion, in which the pilot will have to alter his planned route while en route. Situations like this cannot be created in real life. This is a perfect example of how advantageous this flight simulation can be.

The first chapter, *Learning to Fly*, covers flight physics, basic, advanced, and precision maneuvers, the primary controls, stalls, takeoffs, and landings.

Sierra Pro Pilot allows you to fly five different aircraft, all with significantly different specifications. Chapter Two, *Aircraft and Systems*, explains the characteristics of flying trainers, high-performance and multi-engine aircraft, and jets, so you'll have some idea of what to expect even before your first flight.

Sierra Pro Pilot puts you in the pilot's seat of your very own plane.

"Perhaps the most valuable component of *Sierra Pro Pilot* is the Virtual Flight Instructor, the instructional video library, which is available from anywhere within the sim."

Online Help

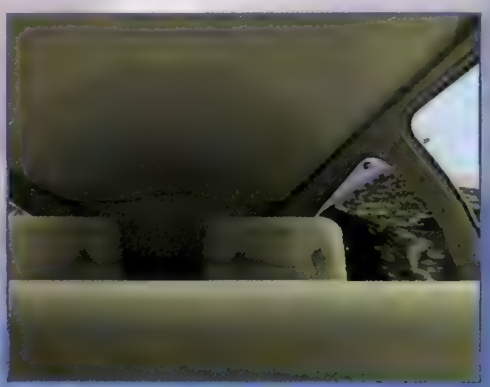
If you're a new or inexperienced student pilot who isn't familiar with the instruments and controls inside the cockpit, *Sierra Pro Pilot*'s online help system provides immediate access to any questions you may have. Even more-experienced pilots who have never been behind the yoke of a CitationJet are bound to encounter unfamiliar instrumentation. A simple right-click on any instrument face, control knob, switch, lever, wheel, gauge, light, etc., and a brief description of the object is displayed in a pop-up box. For detailed information on, say, the purpose of the instrument, a hypertext link will take you further inside the online manual.

And because experience in planes doesn't necessarily translate to experience in computer-based flight sims, the online manual also walks you through all of the menus and dialog boxes you'll encounter while using *Sierra Pro Pilot*.

Experienced pilots will appreciate the ability to review advanced maneuvers and log simulated instrument time. Beginning pilots will appreciate the step-by-step approach they can take at their own pace to learn the basics. In fact, the only question about flying *Sierra Pro Pilot* cannot answer is: "Is it work or is it play?"

Enjoy panoramic views of such landmarks as the Grand Canyon.

Every indicator and instrument is fully functional and meticulously reproduced.



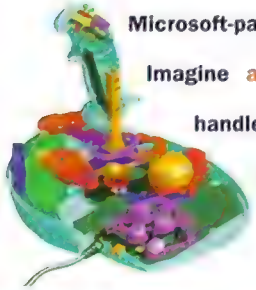
360-degree interior views of the aircraft add to the realism of the flight experience.

Force feedback adds the sense of touch to supported games so you can actually feel the game. But a force feedback joystick isn't worth a dusty Pong if the stick is pulling processing power from your computer and slowing down your game. That's why the Microsoft® SideWinder® Force Feedback Pro has a 25MHz 16-bit "force co-processor" that does all the force computation on the stick. Which means your computer feels nothing, and your games are never slowed down. Force Feedback Pro is as much as six times faster than other force sticks. So you'll

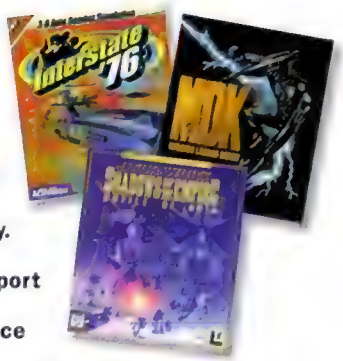
You'll feel it. Your computer won't.

see and feel every Uzi recoil, every stall on take-off from O'Hare, and every nine-iron you shank to the left.

There's also real rocket-science stuff inside the Force Feedback Pro. Like Microsoft-patented digital-optical technology. Imagine a tiny infrared camera that detects handle and throttle motion to within one-hundredth of a degree without any wear or calibration.



The stick is also easily customizable, so in just a few seconds you can program each button the way you like to play. And forget port hogging. Force Feedback Pro has only one computer cable and plugs into your gameport.



Plus, you can test all these features right away with the three killer games included in the box: Interstate '76,™ Star Wars® Shadows of the Empire:™ Battle of Hoth,™ and MDK: Mission Laguna Beach.™ The Microsoft SideWinder Force Feedback Pro. It's designed so that everything in your game will be felt. But only by you. For more information (yes, believe it or not, there is more), go to www.microsoft.com/sidewinder

MICROSOFT® SIDEWINDER® Force Feedback Pro

Microsoft Where do you want to go today?™

Knights of the Sky

Fans of Red Baron have been waiting not-so-patiently for Red Baron II. One fan tells us why it was more than worth the wait.

Red Baron II

www.sierra.com/**rb2**

Preferred System Requirements
Pentium 133+, 24MB RAM, WIN95

Format
WIN95 CD

Available: Fall

Price
$54.95
(Order #83680)

1•800•757•7707

By Josh Demetrescu

RED BARON WAS the legendary nickname of Manfred von Richthofen, the top World War I flying ace and patron saint of fighter pilots. This aerial knight was the inspiration for and is the ultimate opponent in *Red Baron*, the 1990 World War I air combat game from Dynamix. *Red Baron* set the standard for the flight sim genre, providing desktop pilots the chance to experience the thrill and tension of in-your-face aerial dogfights in flimsy wood and canvas flying machines over the trenches of the Western Front. Now from Sierra's Dynamix division comes *Red Baron II*, the anxiously awaited sequel that mixes cutting-edge technology with detailed historical research to set a standard of its own.

How Do You Top a Classic?

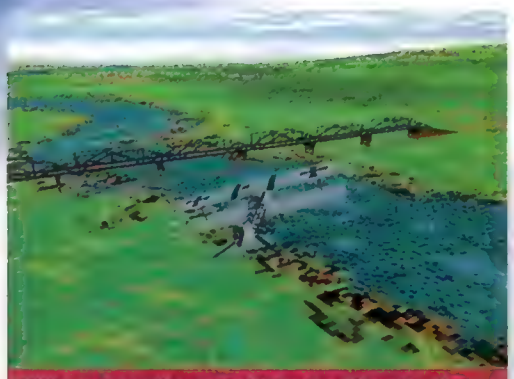
The original *Red Baron* is part of the Dynamix *Aces* collection that boasts such classic combat sims as *Aces Over Europe* and *Aces of the Pacific*. These games included features that are now considered mandatory among serious gamers. A variety of exciting single missions, each presenting a unique opponent or target, gave the player a multitude of gaming options. The *Red Baron* campaign games enabled users to take the place of either a German or British pilot and provided the type of drama and tension that role-playing games make possible.

The original *Red Baron* also distinguished itself by taking advantage of the lower speeds and open cockpits of World War I fighters to provide a good sense of being in combat—an effect that modern jet-to-jet games are gener-

ally unable to offer.

Because it has such an exciting parent product, I have been anxiously awaiting the release of the sequel. Few games have built up the kind of excitement that *RBII* has, let alone so long before they are released. *RBII* has been billed as a complete revision of the original classic: all-new graphics, enhanced AIs, more nationalities, and, most importantly, a new flight engine that gives even greater accuracy and the true feel of being a World War I pilot. Rabid pilots and flight novices alike have been salivating over this game since the first time they heard it was in production. Let me tell you, *RBII* certainly deserves all of the pre-release attention it's garnered—it was well worth the wait.

> "...an in-your-face 'knife fight' with colorful, twisting, zooming & 'jinking' airplanes..."



With such realism, you'll feel as if you're truly flying over the Western Front.

Putting you in the middle of heated WWI dogfights, *RBII* brings home the adrenaline.

The Church Bells Tolled

As a writer for *InterAction*, I got hold of an early release of *RBII*, and one thing's for sure—this game is very advanced and truly amazing.

"*RBII* is a realistic simulation—one that brings you the authentic experience of being a real WWI pilot, flying real WWI aircraft in a real WWI combat environment—which just happens to be totally rip-snortin' fun," designer Gary Stottlemyer emphasizes.

I know that, since it is his game, he should be biased—but as far as I am concerned, Gary is not exaggerating. The graphics are stunning and very realistic. Anyone who has played a flight simulation is accustomed to blocky, one-color terrain that serves its purpose but doesn't do much for the overall feel of the game. In *RBII*, the folks at Dynamix have redefined the portrayal of ground detail. On my first *RBII* flight, I ignored the mission objectives and just flew around at low levels, admiring the incredible terrain.

Hills and open terrain look like, well, hills and open terrain, gently rolling and gaining height. Airbases and towns have distinguishing features, such as churches that ring their bells when enemy aircraft pass over. Trains move slowly along their tracks. I did not make it to the front line, but I am told that *RBII*'s ground details are based on actual WWI army maps of the Western Front—from the English Channel to Switzerland. Stottlemyer and his team have clearly spared no effort to create a realistic and visually exciting product.

The realism of *RBII* is another of the things that blew me away right from the start. First of all, unlike in many games, each of the planes I flew had the specific limitations of the ones from which they are modeled. For example, I wanted to try a complex maneuver (a combination of a half loop followed by a half roll, trading air speed for altitude, and, at the same time, changing the heading by 180 degrees). I found that my plane, an

Albatros D.Va, needed a great deal of air speed to get me through the steep climb and out of the top. If I didn't have the air speed or if I tried to pull out too soon, I sustained significant structural damage and frequently ended up in a fireball on the ground below.

> "...although I dove to put out the fire, I lost control of my craft, pulled too many Gs, blacked out..."

"Obviously the flight model is always important," Stottlemyer says. "And ours is a sophisticated force-based model that faithfully simulates the performance envelopes of the 40-plus planes in *RBII*."

"In addition, if the aircraft is hit, the force of the projectile or blast is actually transmitted to the airframe, and the plane is nudged or even knocked about," he adds. "This is totally cool since combat takes place at Mark I eyeball distance. You can actually see the effects of your rounds hitting your enemy and can watch the aerodynamic effects of the damage you inflict degrade his or her performance."

Squirrely planes make lining up foes realistically difficult. However, when achieved, the kill is a sight to behold.

Up in the Air

I certainly put Gary's descriptions to the test. When I first fired up *RBII*, I wanted to see exactly how each feature worked. So, when my squadron was in the air and on its way to our target, I dropped out of formation, hung back, and fired on my wing mates. Don't worry, I know I'm not supposed to do that, but I wanted to see what would happen. (Plus, they really were sitting ducks.) My plane was pretty squirrelly, as those planes tended to be, so I had to take a few attempts before I could line them up in my sights and blast 'em away. Some gave off a few puffs of smoke when I hit them, while others caught on fire, and one even split a wing. I have to admit, though I felt a bit guilty, it was amazing seeing how literal and realistic the graphics were as they were diving to put out fires or spiraling to their demise.

Of course, when I got hit, the damage was even more apparent, and I could virtually "feel" the hits and effects they left (unfortunately, I didn't have access to a force feedback joystick, or I could have literally felt it, too). At one point, while playing Lieutenant Ryan Belfour of the Jasta 75 squadron in the German Air Service, I shot down an Allied airship. While flying over the flaming remains, I caught a wing on some of the remnants of the downed dirigible. Hearing a loud snap, I struggled for a moment, trying to keep the nose of the plane up, before it wrenched out of my control and spiraled to the ground below. Needless to say, Lieutenant Belfour died on impact when his aircraft's gas tank exploded.

On another mission, Belfour was engaged in strafing. This is the use of a cannon or some primitive rockets on ground targets, such as armored vehicles, transport convoys, grounded aircraft, or military bases. In its simplest form, strafing involves a shallow dive toward the target, with the rockets being fired as the dive is leveled. Unfortunately, strafing is an open invitation for ground fire. Our hapless hero (me) was drilled by some flak, starting an engine fire. This made my aircraft difficult to handle, and although I dove to put out the fire, I lost control of my craft, pulled too many Gs, blacked out, and ended in yet another flaming wreck.

Watch your enemies spiral to the ground as you seek to become the victor of the skies.

Customize your plane to reflect your pilot's national affiliation and reputation.

There are so many missions, several nationalities to play—with the French and Americans making appearances—and expanded campaign options that bring more drama and pain to those of us who live and die through our electronic alter egos.

A mission builder and randomly generated missions will complement the predefined scenarios to provide limitless replayability.

"No longer are you forced to choose between flying missions that some designer has carefully crafted for you or being confronted by a totally barren, lifeless world," Stottlemyer says. "There are no clever 'tricks' to *RBII*'s missions, and they don't play out exactly the same way until you 'solve it' like some infuriating puzzle."

Happily, *RBII* maintains the tension of up-close combat that the first game boasted. It truly is, in Stottlemyer's words, "an in-your-face 'knife fight' with colorful, twisting, zooming, and 'jinking' airplanes, barely a hundred yards away, that you're trying to nail with short-range machine gun fire." As much as it is a precise simulation, it is also a highly playable game and a really fun one at that.

Multiplayer Madness

Another exciting addition to *RBII* is the ability to play, via the Internet, modem, or network, with other people. Players can team up and take it to the enemy or go head to head for the ultimate contest of combat supremacy. The game also provides for the ability to create custom multiplayer scenarios to test even the most experienced pilot.

My few forays into this exciting combat has only whetted my appetite for more, and you can bet on me spending many long nights in front of the computer. For those who just can't wait to start clearing the skies of enemy aircraft or who want to experience the excitement of a classic game, Sierra is giving—yes, giving—away the complete 16-color version of the original *Red Baron* on their website at **www.sierra.com/free**. This will get you ready for the sequel, to be sure. And not to get too cocky, but I'm saving a little bit of my hard drive for the film of ol' Manfred going down in flames again.

in the WORKS

Aces: X-Fighters

what if

The end of World War II was a pivotal period in the history of aviation. For the first time, air forces literally had decided the fate of the world. But the war ended before every new plane could take flight. And the question is, "What might have been?"

The mysterious draw of these little-known war aircraft is something air combat sim fans find endlessly compelling. Now, thanks to *Aces: X-Fighters*, you can engineer your own exotic fighters and take them into battle. Pit a plane like the P-59B Airacomet (the only twin-engine jet fighter delivered to the U.S. Army Air Force during WWII) against the sleepily radical Do 335A with its hellish firepower. Or design your own custom aircraft.

Lead a squadron, fly a historical mission—even engage in a quick dogfight with X-Fighters. The battle in the skies is up for grabs. Look for design updates on the *Aces: X-Fighters* website at **www.sierra.com/xfighters**.

You're flying by the seat of your pants. Make every shot count with quick thinking.

THE HERC PHENOMENON

Earthsiege 3 sets the stage for the ultimate showdown in the war of robot simulations... and you won't believe your eyes.

By John Sauer

EARTHSIEGE 3, THE much-anticipated latest hit in the famed Dynamix robotic combat series, takes unmatched 3D technology, combines it with HERC designs that revolutionize the armored combat genre, and adds a perspective on gameplay that hones in on the pure essence of first-person battling in gigantic war machines. The result is explosive 3D armored combat that will redefine how all gaming companies approach this popular game genre. It is the only title that will offer gamers a completely new experience this coming holiday season. And in a market that can quickly become clogged with stale games, it's refreshing to see one that captures the essence of the genre as it opens the doors on future gaming trends.

WE'RE BACK...

You could call *Earthsiege 3* a defining game. The philosophy of game design, production values, even the game engine, are undeniably Dynamix. This title, more than any other, can be seen as a position paper on how the pros create a first-rate game.

"There's a story here," says Ken Embery, producer of *Earthsiege 3*. "This is a triumphant return of Dynamix to the contender's position in this genre. We started the ball game with the original

Earthsiege 3: Future Wars

www.sierra.com/**es3**

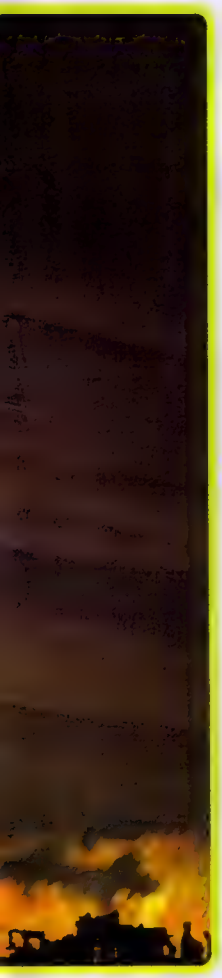
Preferred System Requirements
Pentium 133+, 32 MB RAM, WIN95

Format
WIN95 CD

Available: Fall

Price
$49.95
(Order #83675)

1•800•757•7707



Method Madness: Customize your HERC with more than 50 futuristic weapons.

Lookin' Good: *ES3* features texture-mapped, light source-shaded terrain and vehicles.

Mechwarrior. Now we're back with a combination of technology and gameplay that sets the bar a notch higher. The story is that Dynamix is back at the technological forefront where the gaming community expected us to be."

Bold words—some might say fightin' words—but they accurately define the emotion that Dynamix and the *Earthsiege 3* team have invested in the game. *Earthsiege 3* is ambitious, but what else do you expect from a game company that's made its mark upon the world doing stuff its own way? From the game engine to the gameplay, *Earthsiege 3* is brand-new. The only thing that remains the same is the heritage and ongoing story of the *Earthsiege* universe, which began with *Earthsiege 1*.

> "There's not a single scrap of old code in this game engine. It's new from the ground up."
>
> –Rick Overman: ES3 Lead Programmer

The Dream Engine

Running *Earthsiege 3* through its paces is like getting your hands on the pulse of Dynamix. In creating *Earthsiege 3*, the product faced the challenge of taking an established game series beyond all expectations.

"When we set out to design *Earthsiege 3*," says *ES3* Designer David Selle, "we were told to create the HERC game we would want to play. The problem was, HERCs were getting old. We needed to take the genre somewhere new. So we advanced the game 300 years into the future, added a story angle to the game that allows for unlimited game flexibility, and took armored combat beyond the realm of walking robots on barren planet surfaces."

The foundation for *Earthsiege 3* is a new graphics and game engine, which Dynamix insiders call the "Graphics Core" or the "Sim Engine." Dynamix's all new 3Space 2.0™ engine has its roots in the 3Space gaming engine that defined *Red Baron* and Dynamix itself. An extremely talented group of programmers has been hard at work for the last year and a half building the bleeding-edge engine that is 3Space 2.0. Lead programmer Rick Overman proudly states, "The other game companies are still trying to play catch-up with *Earthsiege 2* technology. What we have now will blow them away."

Anyone who knows Dynamix knows about 3Space—the versatile game engine that helped revolutionize a generation of flight and sub sims (including *Red Baron* and *A-10 Tank Killer*), and quite a few adventure games. When the 3Space concept

SierraWeb–Under Siege

BY THE TIME you read this, the gaming press should be full of articles on *Earthsiege 3*. But the best place to find the latest info on the game is the *Earthsiege 3* page on Sierra's website. Sierra is fairly cool in that they like to show work in progress on their website. Make sure to hit the *Earthsiege 3* site regularly to see updates on how the HERC chassis, game specs, vehicle profiles, and other related information are shaping up. You can even sign up to get *Earthsiege 3* e-mail whenever a new development occurs. You can find the site at: **www.sierra.com/titles/es3**

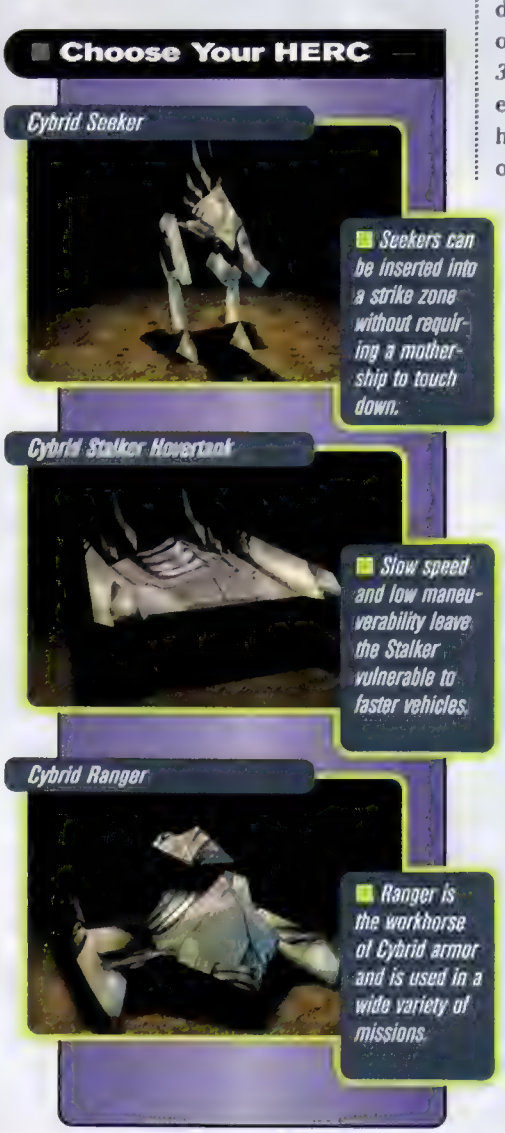
was reviewed last year, Dynamix felt the time was right for something completely new.

"They turned us loose," Overman says. "We were able to take our best concepts, knowledge, and experience, and combine them with completely new code. This is our 3D dream engine."

Three Dimensions: Rolling 3D topography produces unprecedented visible sight distances.

Many Missions: Lead your team through 45 plot missions and limitless random missions.

What this new engine does is open the doors to exceedingly highly detailed lighting effects, the ability to move in completely 3D interiors and exteriors, and new HERC bodies that range from disturbingly human in silhouette to frighteningly organic in appearance. And, of course, there's the 3D. In describing the immersive, 3D nature of the gameplay, Selle says, "*Earthsiege 3*'s software-rendering engine is good enough to go head to head with most hardware-accelerated games. But play it on a supported 3D accelerator card and it'll blow you away. No other game even comes close."



The two most notable differences between *Earthsiege 3* and its predecessors are that you now have the ability to pilot HERCs that run, hover, and fly, and that your battles occur in exterior and interior locations—a first in this genre. "The game engine allows us to move seamlessly from exteriors to interiors, much as you would in a game like *Quake*," says Selle.

> "The ability to customize is one of the key features ...the bottom line is—it's your choice."
>
> —Dave Selle: ES3 Designer

When I made the comparison of *Earthsiege 3* being like "*Quake* on steroids," Selle was quick to realign my focus. "*Earthsiege 3* has the intensity of *Quake* combined with squad-level tactics and armored combat. It's like nothing you've ever experienced." In basic gameplay they both are similar—you fight in first person; the interface is intuitive and oriented to the "face-forward-and-fire" style of play. But where *Quake* is definitely "run and gun," *Earthsiege 3* challenges your combat skills in a variety of mission-based environments.

Better by Design

Earthsiege 3 takes place in a future where three forces battle for dominance: the Corporations, the Mars Rebels, and the inhuman Cybrids—mankind's war machines run amok. But the game has a larger purpose than just domination. The sun is going supernova, and the overarching object of the game is to discover faster-than-light travel and get the heck out—before the other guys. You can play as a Corp, Rebel, or Cybrid.

In addition to more than 45 scripted, single-player missions dedicated to the main game objective of survival, there are an unlimited number of random, generated-on-the-fly side-missions on the solar system's moon, planets, and asteroids, which allow you to build skill and credits to advance your overall cause. Players who like to manipulate their environments will appreciate the ability to generate missions and terrain

to their specifications for multiplayer combat.

A HERC of a Different Color

In plain mechanics, the game has more in common with sims because the physical characteristics, such as speed and turning radius, of each of the 40 HERC chassis are geared to each body style. Most of the HERCs are completely new designs. A few, such as the Apocalypse, are easily recognizable as evolutions of the most popular chassis styles from *Earthsiege 2*.

The HERCs fall into a few main body styles: wheeled, hovering, tracked, flying, and, of course, bipedal. Each has characteristics that make it vital to integrated battle strategies. Bipedal HERCs, for example, can run at phenomenal speeds, but take a while to reach those speeds—and to slow down. Wheeled vehicles get going faster and can turn tightly, but are challenged in very rough terrain. And flying vehicles go over everything—but become more of a target. And unlike the *Quake*-style games, you can't press a button combination to get a burst of "strafing" speed (although, as with most Dynamix games, you can bet that there will be some kickin' cheat codes buried in there somewhere).

In terms of appearance, the HERCs of both the humans and Cybrids fit the form-follows-function rule. Human-managed bipedal HERCs are much more anthropomorphic than ever before, appearing very humanlike in silhouette. But see one up close and you realize that these HERCs are very much machines, with weapons that mean business. Human HERCs carry markings that identify them as corporate, and very fanciful tribal markings identify the Mars Rebel units. Cybrid HERCs, on the other hand, reflect their inhuman origin as thinking machines with a smoother, insectlike, organic appearance. See them all come together on a battlefield—a likely occurrence, especially in multiplayer games—and you actually can tell them all apart.

When you build a HERC in *Earthsiege 3*, you know why each component is important. There are more than 50 classes of weapons to choose from, in an almost limitless variety of configurations.

"The ability to customize—logically—is one of the key features of gameplay," says Selle. "The HERC management menus are more intuitive than ever before, giving you a clear picture of the effect and consequences of your equipment selections. If you want to load an aerial HERC with electron whip-type weapons, you can do it—even though that type of chassis is more suited for weapons that maximize air strikes and strafing runs. The bottom line is—it's your choice."

What You See Is What You Kill

If players had any complaints about *Earthsiege 2*, it was that the HERCs were sometimes too difficult to control. In a very frank assessment of gameplay, producer Ken Embery says, "One of the criticisms we heard most often on *Earthsiege 2* was that controls options such as turretting (also called the torso twist)—which allows gamers to pivot the HERC and fire in another direction than it's moving—were too difficult to use effectively. It's good feedback and

The HERC Phenomenon

THE MECH GAMING phenomenon has captured the imaginations of millions of gamers. Long a cult favorite among sci-fi readers, first-person combat in 60-foot-tall, armored bipedal robots came to the PC in the mid-1980s when Dynamix veteran Damon Slye designed the first *Mechwarrior* game under the original FASA license. This was the first game to give players the experience of walking the planet like a giant, able to see life from the cockpit and fry the competition with everything from projectile cannons to high-powered lasers. A whole generation of robot combat games sprang from this source.

More than 10 years later, just about every major gaming company has its own flavor of mechanized, shooting robots, though only a few have built followings—the *Earthsiege* series and the FASA-licensed games among them. But while the FASA *Mechwarrior* license jumps from company to company depending on such mitigating factors as cold hard cash, *Earthsiege* has stayed firmly in the hands of Dynamix. Maybe that's why the growth of this universe has been so consistent. It's nice to know that some things aren't for sale!

we took it to heart in creating the interface for *Earthsiege 3*."

As a result, in *Earthsiege 3* the combat is completely frontal. What you see is what you kill. The game is easily controlled with a mouse and keyboard, but support has been built in for all major joysticks and rudder pedals, including the new breed of force feedback sticks. Though you can turn in any direction, you always attack within the sight-radius of the direction you are facing. Firing is accomplished with a cursor that offers a different range of movement depending on which weapon and HERC you are using. Overman likens the interface to the eye-tracking mechanism used in military attack helicopters. The two are so similar that, internally, the product team has code-named the targeting interface "Look & Lock."

Expanded tactical battle options include satellite surveillance, mobile artillery, and air strikes. And you can prowl the battlefield from any of the 3D cockpits in your squad with VR-Command mode, an experience that gives you the thrill of command as well as the thrill of combat. One feature that was popular in early games, but has been missing from recent titles, is the VCR mode. In *Earthsiege 3* you can "tape" a crushing defeat of a buddy and then e-mail it to it to him as an .AVI file until he begs for mercy. Victory is sweet!

Death Matches

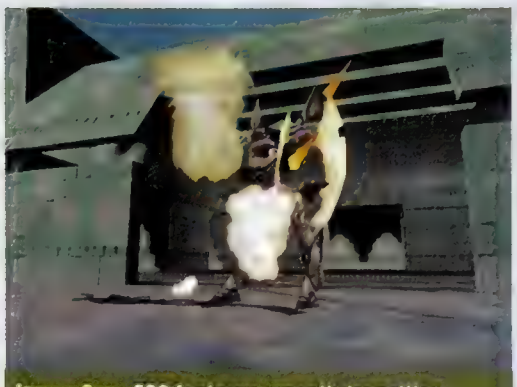
As a single-player game, *Earthsiege 3* shines as a technological showpiece. But in multiplayer mode, the game takes advantage of some very special hooks in the "Dream Engine." Anyone who is a multiplayer fan can appreciate the death-match style of play that's the rage these days. *Earthsiege 3* offers death-match play in an environment where the number of players is limited only by the bandwidth of your LAN connection. Here you can death-match in teams—a multiplayer gaming first.

"This one is going to be a real network crusher," says a grinning Overman. "Seriously, we intend for *Earthsiege 3*—in the long run—to be its own online universe. But we want to give players the flexibility to grow huge LAN tournaments as well, and open the door to new styles of cooperative play."

For example, in multiplayer mode you can team up with a partner or two and engage in any of the randomly generated mini-missions. So instead of playing death tag, you and a partner can guard a convoy or engage in a mining mission deep in Cybrid, Rebel, or Corp territory. The possibilities are almost as unlimited as the scope of the missions.

To foster the growth of independent *Earthsiege 3* websites and tournaments, Dynamix is shipping both client and server software in the box. The server allows the host to drop in and out of combat in real time, offering both a high level of control and the ability to assume some interesting, godlike powers (for unscrupulous game masters!).

Stunningly Rendered: All vehicles are rendered using the new 3Space 2.0 graphics system.



Inside Out: *ES3* features smooth transitions between indoor and outdoor environments.

A Quick Hit on Specs

So what does this new "Dream Engine" deliver?

- Server-based Internet, TCP/IP network, modem and serial connection multiplayer support
- Fully texture-mapped, Gouraud and light source-shaded terrain and vehicles
- Rolling 3D topography, with unprecedented visible sight distance
- Highly optimized graphics and rendering routines for excellent speed performance
- Seamless transition from indoor to outdoor environments
- Advanced physics modeling, including rigid body motion
- 3D sound effects
- NT and multiprocessor support
- Support for Direct3D and native support of 3D accelerator cards including Rendition and 3DFX
- Enhanced game performance, 16-bit color, subsampling of textures, Z-buffering, translucent explosion and smoke effects, and colored light sources with 3D accelerator cards

Worth the Wait

There's only one thing wrong with *Earthsiege 3*, and that's the fact that you can't play it until December. If you are a mechanized-combat fan, this ranks as a must-have. But it has significant value to any serious gamer as well. *Earthsiege 3* is a title that demonstrates how good gameplay rules when game developers don't sell out. And that's a value we all can appreciate.

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King's Quest: Mask of Eternity

www.sierra.com/**mask**

Preferred System Requirements
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Format
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(Order #70030)

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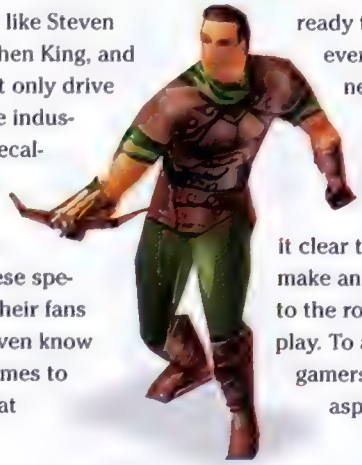
By David Senan

THERE ARE FEW people out there who redefine their artistic medium every time they sit down to work on a new project. People like Steven Spielberg, Stephen King, and Tom Clancy not only drive their respective industries, they continue to recalibrate their fans' expectations whenever they sit down to breathe life into the blank page. These special people know what their fans want long before they even know they want it. When it comes to PC adventure games, that person is Sierra Co-founder Roberta Williams.

When Roberta returned to the studio early in 1997 after a sabbatical of more than a year, she made it clear that she had usefully spent her time off researching and playing some of the most popular games in a number of successful genres. She identified what it is about games such as *Warcraft*, *Diablo*, and *Tomb Raider* that has made them huge hits. With all of this research (cool job, huh?) added to her personal creative inventory, she returned to her offices at Sierra recharged and ready to do what she does every time she designs a new adventure game—redefine the genre she helped create 15 years ago.



Roberta made it clear this new game would make an almost radical return to the roots of interactive gameplay. To appeal to all kinds of gamers, it would have to mix aspects of adventure,

action, and fantasy-role playing games. Her next title would represent a new type of game that was more than a hybrid of diverse gaming genres. With her unique ability to obtain the necessary talent and resources to make it all happen, she boldly went to work on *King's Quest: Mask of Eternity*.

Action-filled Adventure

It stands to reason that Roberta would know exactly what elements would need to be included in *Mask*. But just because *Mask* is the eighth installment in the *King's Quest* series—the most popular PC adventure game series to date—does not mean it should be more of the same.

"If you don't change, it gets stale," Roberta explains. "And that's the challenge—giving them (the public) the pattern or formula they know and feel comfortable with but making it different from anything they've seen or experienced before."

Mask is going to be different from anything anyone has seen before. The tastes and demands of the fans are constantly changing. In order to keep up with them, Roberta decided *Mask* would not simply be a new chapter in an already popular series. Rather, she and the team would build a completely unique game from the ground up without any constraints in terms of budget, technology, and talent. Hey, she's Roberta Williams—she's never even heard of "limitations."

"*Mask* is more action-oriented," she explains. "But we use the action orientation for surprise, conflict, and exploration. It's an entirely new 3D look for an adventure game world. Fighting is one element—it's not the point of the game. We aren't trying to compete with *Doom* and its thousands of derivatives. The fighting elements in *Mask* work in concert with the puzzles and the story...first and foremost, this is an adventure game."

The development team has made some changes to the fundamental elements that adventure gamers have come to expect. But each and every enhancement was carefully thought out by Roberta and longtime Sierra Producer Mark Seibert. This is to ensure the key elements that make for great adventure games weren't sacrificed.

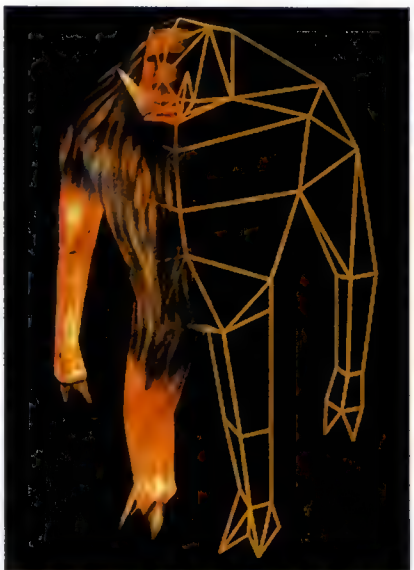
ICE AND SNOW: Every step in this ice-ridden realm spells potential disaster.

PUSH COMES TO SHOVE: Physical puzzles require a mix of brains and brawn.

"That's the challenge—giving the public a formula they know and feel comfortable with but making it different from anything they've seen or experienced before"

—Roberta Williams

"We really tried to stay away from the sliding tile puzzles and the 'get something and give it to someone else' type of gameplay," Seibert explains. "But we also didn't want it to be an arcade game." He was adamant in stressing that *Mask* will have elements of both real-time action and fantasy role-play-



Monster Map: State-of-the-art texture mapping brings this goblin to life in *Mask of Eternity*.

ing games but, "It's more of a mind game than a twitch game." Between the real-time combat sequences, the ability to develop Connor (the central hero) any way you want, and some of the most innovative puzzles Roberta has ever dreamed up, this definitely will be the most intriguing *King's Quest* game yet.

A New Look

Part of the "new look" of *Mask* is founded in the advanced technology it uses. The powerful 3Space engine developed by Sierra's Dynamix division is bringing a whole new look and feel to the world of *King's Quest*.

What's different is in the way gamers can choose how they view the world around them. 3Space makes it easy to freely explore the three-dimensional kingdom of Daventry. Gamers can travel the traditional route of guiding Connor through his adventures, or they can view the world first-person through his eyes. Suddenly you'll find yourself surrounded by beautifully sprawling 3D landscapes that you can explore in real time just about any way you like. You can smoothly move between indoor and outdoor environments. Delve deep into the bowels of the *Mask of Eternity* temple in search of the true significance of the ancient golden artifact. Battle a three-headed dragon that stands between you and the Celestial Realm. Brave the frozen terrain and ferocious creatures in the Frosty Mountains. The terrain varies immensely, and yet transitions are smooth as silk. That's the power of the technology that drives *Mask*.

What's the Story Here?

Despite all of the innovative new things the *Mask* team is promising for the game, it is still a Roberta Williams game, and that means it's heavily rooted in the imaginative storyline behind the adventure. But how exactly is the story behind *Mask* different from previous *King's Quest* games?

"With past *King's Quest* games I focused the story around the Royal Family," Roberta explains. "But I've done just about as much as I could with the Royal Family. I knew I needed to bring in a new character, and I knew I wanted the character to be less Disney-ish and more cerebral. The spiritual father of *Mask* is J.R.R. Tolkien, not Walt Disney," she concludes firmly.

Connor is very much a new character. He is an inhabitant of Daventry, a kingdom he doesn't rule but whose fate lies in his hands. A terrible curse has turned all of the people living in Daventry, including the Royal Family themselves, into stone. Connor must find the answers behind the curse, including why it's been imposed, who imposed it, and, possibly most importantly, why he alone has been spared the terrible fate of his comrades. Connor is a warrior and it's his combination of strength, cunning, intuition, and intellect that make him best-suited to save the kingdom.

It would seem the *King's Quest* series has grown up a bit with the creation of *Mask*. Evidence of this continually surfaces throughout the game but is especially apparent with the central antagonist and Archarchon, Lucreto. His storyline parallels that of Lucifer, the fallen angel whose attempt to overtake Heaven ends him up in Hell. It's quite obvious Roberta has done her homework.

"When I tackle a new game, it's like I'm tackling a thesis," Roberta says. "I got all these books on mysterious places and imaginary things: the

> **"The fighting elements in Mask work in concert with the puzzles and the story... first and foremost, this is an adventure game."**
>
> —Roberta Williams

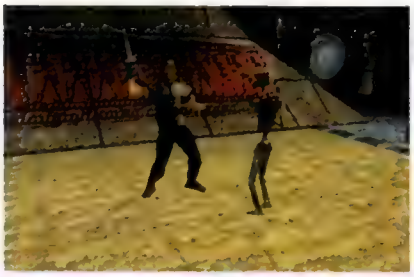
Surrounded: These goblins may be a pain now, but later you can go through their pockets for change.

"The Mask of Eternity itself is the glue that keeps order in the world and keeps chaos at bay—and when it's broken..."

Brothers Grimm, myths and legends, Victorian fairy tales, puzzle books, codes and ciphers, and ancient inventions. I started reading them and taking lots and lots of notes, always coming up with plenty of story scenarios. Then I picked the ones I liked best and went with them."

The Mask of Eternity itself is the glue that keeps order in the world and keeps chaos at bay—and when it's broken.... In order to solve the mystery behind the curse of Daventry and restore celestial order, Connor must find the broken pieces of the Mask and defeat Lucreto in the ultimate battle between good and evil. When you stand toe to toe with evil, staring it square in the eye, and faced with defining the true meaning of life, you'll really understand the almost insane sense of enthrallment behind this epic adventure.

The story behind the legend of the broken Mask is an apt metaphor for the development of *Mask of Eternity*. Roberta has broken apart all of her fans' preconceptions about what the latest installment will hold. Per usual, Roberta has taken an exceptionally acclaimed and popular idea, reworked it with a special combination of creativity and technology, and come up with adventure like never before. Fans of Roberta Williams have learned a very complex rule about her work: Never let yourself expect anything short of the unexpected. But there is one thing we can always expect from Roberta—unparalleled excellence.



NICE PLACE YOU GOT HERE: In addition to spectacular landscapes, *Mask* features beautifully rendered interiors.

UNMASK THE TRUTH: Deep in the temple of the *Mask of Eternity* is where you may find the true meaning of life.

www.sierra.com/mask

SIERRA'S WEB TEAM specifically asked us to tell everyone about the *Mask of Eternity* website. Of course they're proud of all of its features and how well the site represents the game, but they thought it was crucial to respond to all of the postings to the message boards asking, "What ever happened to WebLady Cindy?"

While it's true that Cindy Vanous is one of the most popular people here at Sierra, I don't think Roberta Williams knew what kind of uproar she would cause by hiring Cindy away from the Web team so she could focus exclusively on creating the *Mask of Eternity* website. Here are just a few of the fascinating "behind-the-scenes" things you'll find when you visit *www.sierra.com/mask*:

- A summary of the story behind the *Mask of Eternity* as well as how it evolved from the *King's Quest* saga
- An archive of all the latest artwork, screenshots, and character sketches. As the art team finishes them, Cindy gets them up on the site
- A downloadable backstage look at the people, technology, and ideas behind the development of *Mask*
- Soundbytes of *Mask*'s musical score as well as some other mysterious sounds from the hard drive of sound guy Ben Hogue—that better be his hard drive
- Talk directly to the development team through the *Mask* message boards and receive periodic updates from the development team through an exclusive e-mail newsletter
- Find out all of the information about how to enter the *Mask of Eternity* $25,000 Internet Treasure Hunt (also check out page 12 of this magazine for contest details)

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Format
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By Beth Demetrescu

WHAT DO YOU get when you take a "true-blue" racing simulation, add several 4x4s, toss in a few buggies for good measure, and drop the whole mixture in a vat of mud? *SODA Off-Road Racing*—one of the most exciting projects currently under development by Software Allies and Papyrus.

SODA stands for the Short-course Off-road Drivers Association, which was founded in 1981. These off-road drivers race "modified" trucks, four-wheel-drives, or buggies around a set track with varying grades of difficulty against other off-road vehicles. *SODA Off-Road Racing* puts you right in the thick of the action—jumping cliffs and scaling mountains—all the time trying to outmuscle fellow mudslingers to the finish line.

This Is an Alpha?

Since there's always a line at the *InterAction* super PC to play *SODA Off-Road Racing*, it looked like it was going

Part of the excitement of *SODA Off-Road Racing* is catching huge air off jumps.

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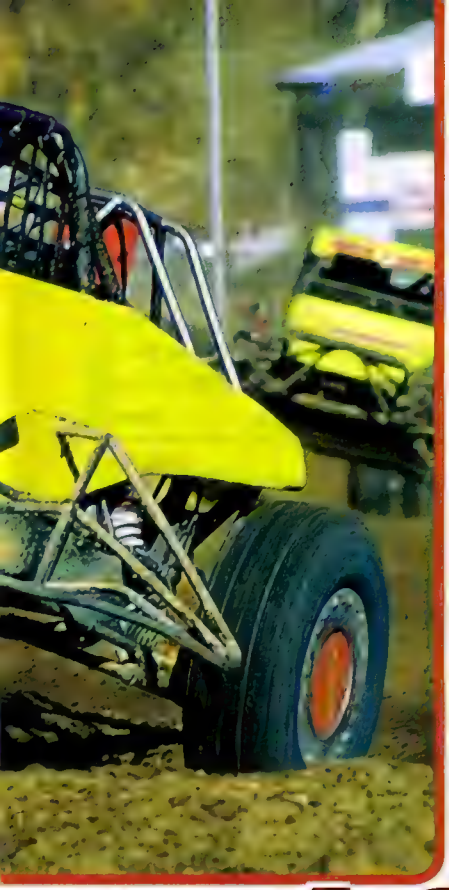


and So Much Mud

to take a while before I would be able to take it for a spin. So, I caught up with longtime Papyrus Beta Tester Lonnie Larkan to get a feel for what I was in for. Larkan, an extreme racing enthusiast, has tested some of the most popular games, including *NASCAR Racing* and *IndyCar Racing*. I knew if anyone could tell me what makes this sim hot, Lonnie was the man.

The first thing Larkan emphasized is that the standards this design team has set for itself are unbelievably high. So high, in fact, that he says, "With a little spit and polish, a printed manual, and a box, this program (even in the alpha phase) could be selling out in every country." Even with the earliest pre-alpha versions, he was able to fire them up and immediately start perusing the various menu screens, configuring his steering wheel, and grinding it out in the mud pits.

Setup Is Everything

There are three vehicles modeled in *SODA Off-Road Racing*. First, there is the two-wheel-drive 800-horsepower race truck. Then there is the four-wheel-drive 800-horsepower truck. And finally, there is the light 150-horsepower buggy. Each of the vehicles has its own unique features. For example, the four-wheel-drive pickup has considerably greater traction than the two-wheel-drive, thus it is easier to handle in turns and maintain speed going up inclines. The 4x4 also has better acceleration and can take turns faster. On the other hand, the buggy is more of a "driver's vehicle." Instead of making up for mistakes with horsepower, you can only win if you maintain your momentum through the turns.

Since each individual racer has his or her own favorite ways of setting up vehicles, *SODA Off-Road Racing* also features a garage area where you can customize things like the suspension settings and determine the amount of horsepower the engine makes. "In the area of suspension," Larkan says, "you can alter the shock and spring settings as well as choose from three types of tires." As with all of Papyrus' popular racing sims, races can be won and lost in the garage area.

Don't hit the turns too fast, or you'll find yourself resting on the roof of your vehicle.

Simulated Adrenaline

Even in this early stage of production, the physics model for this program accurately depicts the feeling of driving a high-horsepower vehicle in an off-road environment. "This is a simulation, not a game!" Larkan stresses. "I often find myself leaning my head as I slide around the turns. And the jumps give you the definite impression you are flying alone in a 3,000-pound truck or a much lighter (but lower-powered) buggy."

When you drive *SODA Off-Road Racing*, you have to drive much as though you are in a real truck, racing on a real track. If you are a "pedal to the metal" type, you'll have outrageous fun, spinning 360s and jumping cliffs, but you'll finish the race behind the pack every time. You also want to try to navigate the best driving line. This is the line that will give you the best

Fences
The "Fences" layer allows you to put up four different types of fences–post, flag, stone, and wire.

Objects
Clicking on the "Objects" tab gives you the choice of cones, grandstands, road signs, trees, barns, and many others.

Road
To change the direction or shape of the track, click on the "Road" tab.

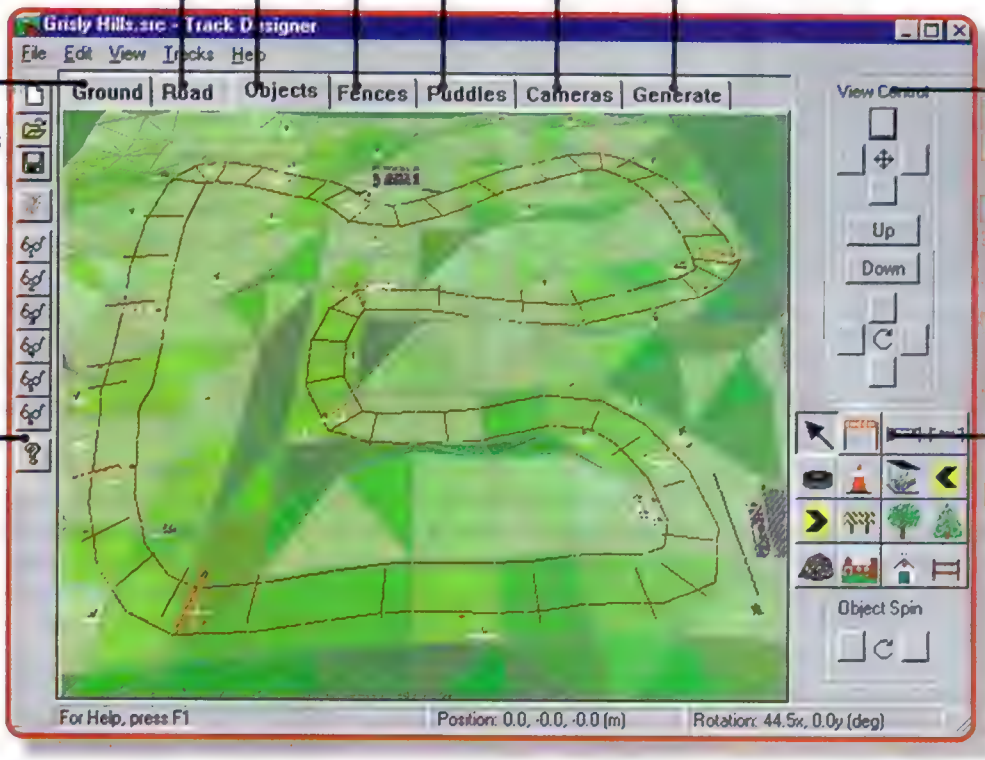
Ground
Track Designer lets you drastically alter the elevation of the course and surrounding grounds with mountains and valleys by clicking this tab.

Views
These presets allow you to view your track from different angles.

Puddles
You may create puddles and small lakes anywhere on the track within the "Puddles" layer.

TV Cameras
In order to view your vehicle and key points, you may set up TV cameras with this tab.

Generate
To have the program put your newly created track into the active tracks folder, and to have it check for illegal turns, click on "Generate."



View
The "View Control" allows you to raise, lower, tilt, and twist your view so you can see the track you are creating from all angles.

Objects
It is necessary to have at least three checkpoints on your track for it to be legal and accepted by the Track Designer program.

surface for the tires to dig into. It also is the line that provides you with fastest times over the jumps. "The jumps are awesome in this program, since they're modeled so accurately," Larkan says. "You'll feel your stomach drop when you leave the ground."

You'd better spend some time planning your jumps, however, since landing requires perfect timing. Without perfect timing, you'll never nail your next turn or jump. "Don't think you can just put the hammer down and hang on," Larkan advises. "You'll need to practice the track and learn how much speed you should carry on each portion of the race."

Larkan found the driving surface exactly mirrors the effects of driving in real mud and grass, as well as dirt. "Go through deep water and mud, and feel your truck bog down," Larkan says. "Get your tires off the dirt surface and on the grass, and you will surely lose time and probably spin. Worse yet," he adds, "you may roll the vehicle."

One of the best features of *SODA Off-Road Racing* is the Track Designer. Although it allows you to create fantastic, complex courses, it is practically foolproof and simple to use. Whether you want several checkpoints, tons of obstacles and trees, a few grandstands, or just some serious elevation, the Track Designer lets you create the type of track on which you want to race.

"On my first attempt, I made what I thought was a very professional and challenging track," Larkan says. "Don't worry about the artificial intelligence not knowing how to drive the new track you create," he adds. "There is a feature built in to the program so that, after a new track is completed, the computer analyzes the track and calculates the best driving line for all the vehicles. And I have to tell you, it does a damn fine job!"

Time to Hit the Track

Well, pumped up with all of Larkan's

For copyright and trademark information, please see page 6

enthusiasm for *SODA Off-Road Racing* and his excited endorsement of the Track Designer, not to mention his warning about possible rollovers, I felt I was ready to soup up a vehicle and hit the mud.

As I mentioned above, this game has become quite popular around here, so it took some persuasive talk on my part ("Ummmm, guys, how can I write about it, if I never get a chance to play it?"), but at last, it was all mine.

Our Thrustmaster steering wheel was still warm when I fired up *SODA Off-Road Racing*. After some careful consideration, I chose the two-wheel-drive truck to race. OK, actually I just picked the first vehicle on the list, but I did put a decent amount of thought into what paint job I wanted. Not really knowing how to set up a vehicle properly, I went with the default suspension settings and selected middle-of-the-road horsepower. Now I was ready to take my flashy blue, red, and yellow truck for a ride.

When I was in the track selections menu, I noticed there were plenty of regular tracks and some that I was sure did not originally come with the game. "Burly Montana," for example, is a track created by the *InterAction* team. I figured for my first run, I should probably stick with a stock course. Not, as I quickly found out, that they are any easier.

There I was at the starting line, revvin' my engine, ready to go. I had chosen the heli-cam view (camera above my truck), so I could see the truck and the terrain at the same time. The flag was waved, and I floored it. I spun about four doughnuts as my opponents left me in their dust. Once I got it going, I kept spinning out. Finally, I realized, I am as much of a lead foot in games as I am in real life. I tried easing up on the gas and had some success. Perhaps a four-wheel-drive would be more up my alley.

Fortunately, there was a four-by in my paint scheme. This time when the flag waved, I eased on the gas and was off. That is when it really set in—this game was seriously cool! If you choose to stay on the track, there are all kinds of obstacles, like cliffs, water, even a big ravine to jump. If you decide to stray from the beaten path, there are challenges galore. I caught some monster air launching off a huge mountain. It was weird, but I even found myself holding my breath until I landed (after rolling a few times) at the bottom.

After winning this race (OK, OK, I finished dead last), I decided to take on a custom-made track. "Burly Montana," aside from being a truly hair-raising course, has to be the place where off-road vehicles go to die. This is a deep, deep valley that is very easy to fall into and extremely difficult to get out of. Frequently, when opposing trucks rolled down, they landed on their roof, wheels spinning in the air. "Burly Montana" really is the final resting place for any off-road machine.

I can't emphasize enough—this simulation is a real kick in the pants. Whether you are a seasoned racer or a novice needing some huge air, *SODA Off-Road Racing* has everything you are looking for. One of the most astonishing things about *SODA Off-Road Racing* is that the game we all have been playing is simply a pre-Alpha version. If something so early in development can keep us so captivated, it truly boggles the mind to think what the finished product will hold!

Choose Your Vehicle

Vehicle Type: 4x4 Truck
Weight: 1500 kg
Power: 250-800 hp
L/W of Wheel Base: 3.39m/1.9m
Suspension Movement: .61m

Vehicle Type: 4x2 Buggy
Weight: 900 kg
Power: 110-150 hp
L/W of Wheel Base: 2.88m/2.6m
Suspension Movement: .43m

Vehicle Type: 4x2 Truck
Weight: 1400 kg
Power: 250-800 hp
L/W of Wheel Base: 3.39m/1.9m
Suspension Movement: .61m

PHOTO BY NIGEL KINRADE

The NASCAR® Grand National® Series Expansion Pack brings all-new teams, aggressive young drivers, and a bevy of new tracks to test your skills.

NASCAR Grand National Series Expansion Pack

www.sierra.com/**motorsports**

Available: Fall

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Format
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By John Williams

ADD-ON PACKS have become a popular trend in computer software in recent years. Usually these "add-ons" and "expansion packs" offer a "more-of-the-same" experience for the few players who have already exhausted all the features of the original game. Very rarely do they offer substance to users who are still content with the features of the original product.

The new *NASCAR Grand National Series Expansion Pack* for *NASCAR Racing 2* is one of those rare software add-ons that really does offer substantial new features to both novice and expert players alike. The package dramatically enhances the core *NASCAR 2* simulation with a combination of new drivers, new tracks, new cars, new racing teams, and the chance to compete in a full season of competitive driving in a whole new series. These additions dramatically double the competition, features, and fun of the original racing sim, making it a must-have for any *NASCAR 2* owner.

Don't be distracted by the tall towers of Texas Motor Speedway. You have no time for sightseeing on this tight track.

Tomorrow's NASCAR Greats

Just as millions of loyal football fans show up at college games around the country to "scout" for the next big players of the NFL, millions of avid NASCAR fans also show up at the Saturday Races of the NASCAR Busch Grand National Series. This competitive national circuit showcases the hottest young drivers waiting for their first shot at the big-time world of Winston Cup championship driving.

Now, *NASCAR 2* drivers will have an opportunity to compete against the best of the Busch Grand National Series. The new *NASCAR Grand National Series Expansion Pack* re-creates the competition of Busch Grand National racing with all the attention to detail and realism that *NASCAR 2* offers for Winston Cup Series driving.

The *NASCAR Grand National Series Expansion Pack* offers a real advantage for new drivers, giving them an opportunity to test their skills and improve their talent before jumping into the even more competitive Winston Cup Championship Series.

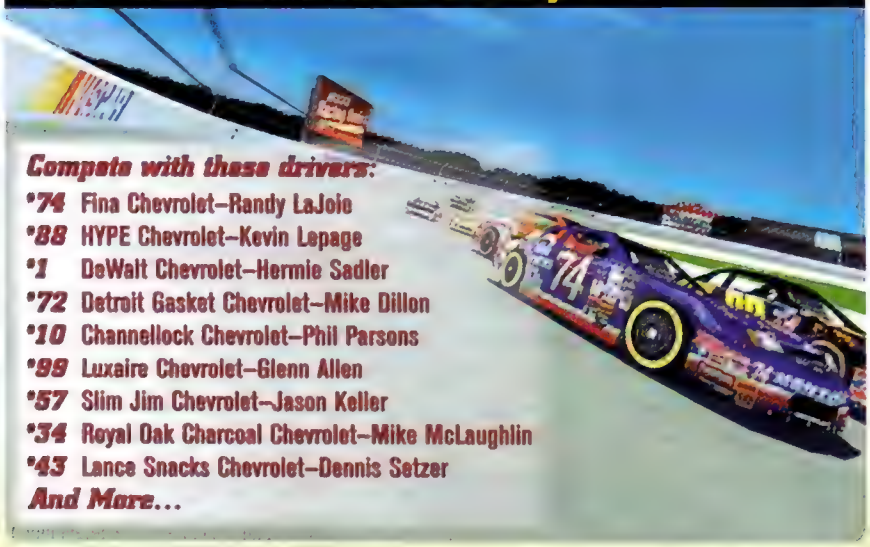
For more experienced and expert *NASCAR 2* drivers, the expanded driver list features new competitors and their unfamiliar styles of driving.

Even if you've perfected the long smooth curves of Atlanta, nose-to-tail with the Labonte brothers, you might not be prepared to go side-by-side with the hungry young drivers on the short tracks they cut their teeth on.

The Grand National circuit features a combination of Winston Cup super speedways like California Speedway and shorter tracks like the .36-mile Hickory Motor Speedway in North Carolina. In between the big super speedways and the short ovals are famous, historical tracks like the South Boston Speedway. With the combination of new drivers, new cars, and new race tracks, the *NASCAR Grand National Series Expansion Pack* gives you nearly the full season of a whole new racing series. It's your chance to compete for the Busch Grand National Series title and move up to Winston Cup competition.

A wide selection of the best drivers, cars, and teams from NASCAR's Busch Grand National Series is included in the *Expansion Pack*.

More Tracks, More Drivers, More Competition



Compete with these drivers:

- *74 Fina Chevrolet–Randy LaJoie
- *88 HYPE Chevrolet–Kevin Lepage
- *1 DeWalt Chevrolet–Hermie Sadler
- *72 Detroit Gasket Chevrolet–Mike Dillon
- *10 Channellock Chevrolet–Phil Parsons
- *99 Luxaire Chevrolet–Glenn Allen
- *57 Slim Jim Chevrolet–Jason Keller
- *34 Royal Oak Charcoal Chevrolet–Mike McLaughlin
- *43 Lance Snacks Chevrolet–Dennis Setzer

And More...

Drive All of the Tracks

The *NASCAR Grand National Expansion Pack* includes 10 tracks from the Grand National Series, including the new California Speedway and Texas Motor Speedway.

Get these tracks and more:

- California Speedway
- South Boston Speedway
- Hickory Motor Speedway
- Nazareth Speedway
- Indianapolis Raceway Park
- Texas Motor Speedway
- Nashville Speedway USA
- Myrtle Beach Speedway
- The Milwaukee Mile
- Gateway International Raceway

Drive The New Tracks

Included among the 12 new tracks of the *NASCAR Grand National Series Expansion Pack* are two tracks that NASCAR drivers have been dreaming about for years and got to experience for themselves the first time this season—Texas Motor Speedway and California Speedway.

The 1.5-mile quad-oval Texas Speedway, which opened this spring to Craftsman Truck, Busch Grand National, and Winston Cup competition, quickly gained notoriety for its high-bank curves. This, the second-largest sports facility in North America, with seating for 260,000 spectators, has been touted as the "track of the future." Controversy erupted after the opening race when drivers complained that the track had only one racing groove and was too tight for side-by-side racing. Was the talk just frustration expressed after a difficult day of driving, or were the complaints warranted? Now, with the *NASCAR Grand National Series Expansion Pack*, *NASCAR 2* drivers will have the opportunity to form their own opinion.

The re-creation of the Texas track is incredible. On your first lap around, it's impossible to keep your eyes off the stunning view of the 205 sky boxes that line the double-dogleg front stretch. You'll quickly learn to pay attention though, as the 24-degree high-banked curves, which taper down to an 8-degree bank at the bottom, are unusual enough to take some getting used to. Drivers will find that the car set-ups for this track are a unique challenge.

Also making its NASCAR debut this year, the California Speedway is Roger Penske's new West Coast cathedral to motor sports. This new West Coast speedway offers NASCAR fans a showcase for the best in super speedway competition.

The challenging D-shaped track at California Speedway offers three different levels of banking, all of which are re-created faithfully by the Papyrus developers. The 14-degree banked turns, 11-degree front stretch, and 3-degree backstretch require drivers to be quick but careful. Add the steady sunshine of the California summer, and the nasty things it can do to tire wear, and this is a course to be reckoned with, one that will challenge the skills of even the best *NASCAR 2* driver.

Challenging Fantasy Tracks

As if delivering the best classic Grand National and Championship tracks (including the two newest tracks) wasn't enough to fulfill the dreams of any *NASCAR 2* fan, the *NASCAR Grand National Series Expansion Pack* also features two unique fantasy tracks that existed only in the imagination of the developers at Papyrus—until now.

Bull Run and Red Rock Raceways provide drivers two fun-to-drive and visually stunning fantasy tracks, creating a challenge even the best professional drivers can't experience in real life.

Bull Run is the kind of track that drivers would drive on Sundays—if they weren't on the circuit. Gentle rolling hills, lots of green grass, picturesque farmland on this 3.6-mile road course that resembles some of the most beautiful backroads of Western Colorado. If it wasn't for the competition three inches from your tail at 110 mph, you'd be tempted to stop for a picnic. Twelve challenging turns keep the drive from being just a sedate ride in the country.

Red Rock Raceway represents the reverse of Bull Run. Dry, desolate, and unforgiving, this 2.6-mile road course features high speeds and sheer cliffs in a rocky canyon setting. This mountainous course is intimidating long before you put other drivers into the mix.

All the tracks in the *NASCAR Grand National Series Expansion Pack* are playable in both full sim and arcade modes, adding hours of excitement for *NASCAR 2* owners. (Sorry, this pack isn't available for owners of the original *NASCAR Racing* simulation.)

The new *NASCAR Grand National Series Expansion Pack* should be available at retailers near you this fall.

Get the "Fantasy Tracks!"

Bull Run Raceway: 12 challenging turns keep this from being just another sedate ride in the country.

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ACTION in a New Dimension

Since Half-Life took the "Best Action Game of E3" award this summer, multimedia reviewer Chris Hudak has been bugging us to let him write about it.

Half-Life

www.sierra.com/**halflife**

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By Chris Hudak

ANY DAY THAT starts off in a missile base is bound to be a grim one, so it goes without saying that any day that starts off *badly* in a missile base will be unpleasant in the extreme. And any day that starts off in *this* missile base—splattered with the remains of your former colleagues, crawling with ill-tempered xenomorphic scum, and patrolled by shadowy government agents who have no compunctions whatsoever about blasting your head into a jumbo-sized Jackson Pollack on the southwest wall—is grade-A nightmare material any way you slice it. Welcome to *Half-Life*, a jaw-dropping, astoundingly immersive first-person action/adventure game with brains, looks,

Utilizing the tried-and-true first-person action style and mixing in bucketloads of cool enhancements, *Half-Life* could very well be the first-person action game to beat this holiday season. —online gaming review

guts, and the kinds of gameplay innovations required to draw and hold the jaded eyes of computer gamers like Yours Almost Always Perfectly Truly. The philosophy behind the design of *Half-Life* was as boldy ambitious as it was glaringly obvious: What intellectual, artistic, and gameplay elements are lacking—or absent entirely—in existing first-person action games, and what would happen if somebody tried to cram them all into one kick-ass title?

The answer: the end of the world as we know it.

The Usual Suspects

Developed by Valve Software—a newborn Kirkland, Washington, game company whose formidable ranks include creative contributors to *Doom*, *Duke Nukem*, *Civilization*, *Zork Nemesis*, and literally dozens of other titles—*Half-Life* is Sierra On-Line's first and formidable dive into the shark-infested waters of the first-person, corridor-crawler genre. Boasting members such as Gabe Newell (company founder and former Microsoft advanced technology whiz), Harry E. Teasley III (game designer/artist, formerly of Shiny Entertainment), Chuck Jones (illustrator/3D artist from Apogee/3D Realms), Ben Morris (creator of *Doom Construction Kit* and the *Worldcraft Doom/Quake* level creation tool), Marc Laidlaw (author of *Dad's Nuke* and *The 37th Mandala*), and Steve Bond (game designer largely responsible for *Half-Life*'s enemy behaviors as well as former pizza deliverer, a past which continues to haunt him even in national magazine articles), the *Half-Life* team has created a fascinating onscreen experience—a thinking-man's action game wherein every observation counts, every action has consequences...and even the failure to observe or act can be every bit as damning as doing something actively moronic.

***Half-Life*'s skeletal animation system enables much more complex and life-like monsters, some composed of more than 6,000 polygons.**

Get Your Filthy Claws Off My Dimension

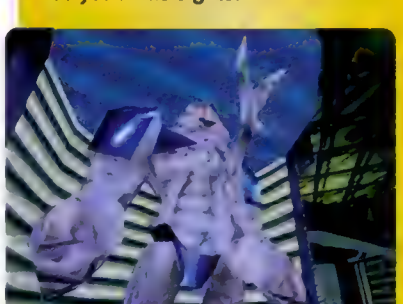
Assigned to a top-secret experiment at a decommissioned missile base, you've made an amazing breakthrough, an alarming discovery, and a stupid decision—thus begins the *Half-Life* adventure, a first-person odyssey that rewards—if that is the word—the paranoid eye and the insightful mind as well as the quick trigger finger. Homicidal alien creatures are everywhere (partly thanks to you), but even that isn't the full extent of your problem. Your former military cronies are extremely pissed off at you for having accidentally invited (or, for that matter, merely witnessed)

Cross-Dimensional Creatures

***Half-Life*'s kingdom holds more than 25 diverse other-dimensional creatures with many distinct varieties within each species. Darwin would be proud.**

It might not be in your best interest to trust the oh-so-deadly Mr. Friendly.

One of your former military cronies has you in his sights.



With three arms, impenetrable armor, and a vengeful nature, you need to keep your distance from this guy.

A Sample of the Team

Valve Software is literally the "Dream Team" of the PC games industry. Co-founders *Mike Harrington* and *Gabe Newell* have been in the biz since there was such a thing. Harrington started his career with Sierra's very own Dynamix, but it was at Microsoft that he first worked with Newell, who was responsible for starting their multimedia division. *Chuck Jones* comes from Apogee/3D Realms, where he was an artist and animator for *Duke Nukem*. *Ken Birdwell*, a senior software development engineer, most recently coded one of the first online games—Compuserve's *Sniper*. *Karen Laur*, "artist at large," was a contributor to Activision's *Zork Nemesis*. And game and level designer *Harry Teasley* has worked on a lot of cool projects. He first worked on Microprose's *Civilization* and later *Doom* for a couple of different console platforms.

the large numbers of extraterrestrial goobers currently running amok about the base. They are just as interested in punching your clock as that of the alien invaders. If all of that wasn't enough, an entire otherworldly ecosystem has settled in nicely and flourished, making for a living, dynamic environment sporting flora and fauna of various sizes, shapes, and dispositions—and God alone knows what they want.

Your mission is twofold: (A) Fight, think, and intuit your way through to the invaders' world, settle their alien hash once and for all, and get back, and (B) Find a way to make peace with the dirty-dealing members of your own murderous race before you become another confidential case file collecting dust somewhere in Area 51.

The World According to Valve

One of the coolest, most compelling things about *Half-Life*'s world is that it's actually a world—no annoying, arbitrary, unrealistic "levels" or "stages" here, just one huge, sprawling environment, select portions of which may just happen to be barricaded, locked, unlit, flooded with radiation, boobytrapped, or hideously defended. When you can see an area, you can probably get to it, and once you get to it you can always go back if you feel that need. But, like many of the places we visit in life, they may not be the same upon your return; damp walls may have grown mossy, a handful of creatures left alone may have thrived and multiplied (more on this later), and bad situations may have gotten a whole lot worse.

This Head Crab is leaping at the chance to plunge its claws into your torso and possess your dead yet functional body.

A squad of Cleaners is on a mission to shut down the alien-infested missile base and "delete" all potential witnesses, namely you.

The Hound Eyes, which move in packs, are intensely intimidating with high-pitched, eardrum-shattering squeals.

Half-Life's dynamic approach also means that objects and vehicles aren't mere background eye-candy but real tools with real uses: Maybe there are tools or guns in that vehicle which can be used to subdue the unpleasant-looking monster currently watching you like a fat, three-eyed mall security guard.

See scientist cornered by Bull Chicken. Bye-bye scientist.

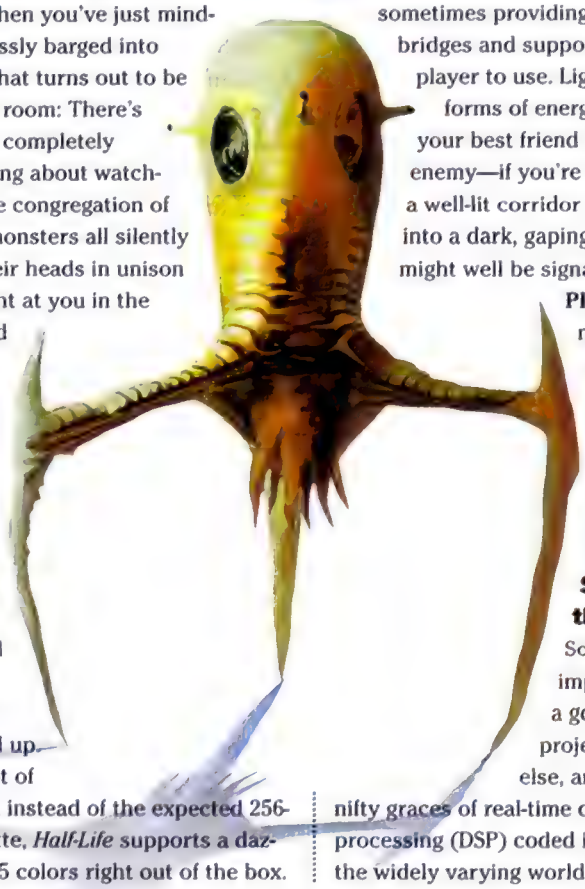
Technological features, such as translucency, create reflective, ultra-realistic water effects.

Maybe you can use the vehicle's headlights to blind the beastie. Or maybe you should just use the vehicle to run the damned thing down—crude, but effective. Why barge in and engage that eight-member weapons team when you could just take out the rotten support next to them and bring the whole room down around their ears?

And do you really want to walk across that spindly-looking catwalk while you're carrying that big, ugly energy weapon? Maybe you can convince some heavy, lumbering thing with the tactical intelligence of an ashtray to walk across it first.

But you're not the only entity with an agenda here. *Half-Life*'s dangerous world is bustling with character activity, human and otherwise. Real-time cinematic sequences add a new level of plot-driven gameplay and eerie realism to the already-immersive first-person action; make a discreet entrance into a room and maybe, just maybe, nobody will know you're there. You're likely to observe patrols, experiments, discussions, arguments, migrations, mutations, and/or murders in progress.

Watch and listen and you just might learn some valuable facts about the mess you're in. Make a less-than-discreet entrance and all eyes in the room will suddenly be on you. Some of them might be on stalks. *Half-Life*'s combinations of compound character animations and switchable body parts allows characters to kneel, pull out weapons, or crane their necks to look around, and this makes for some upsetting visuals, particularly when you've just mindlessly barged into what turns out to be a crowded room: There's something completely skin-crawling about watching a whole congregation of men and monsters all silently turning their heads in unison to look right at you in the splitsecond just before the violence ensues.



The Light at the End

Half-Life is engineered in 16-bit color from the ground up. The upshot of this is that instead of the expected 256-color palette, *Half-Life* supports a dazzling 65,535 colors right out of the box. If you happen to have a 3D card, you'll be seeing over 16 million colors. In either case, no first-person gamer will be disappointed with the realistic lighting and gorgeous visual effects: Colored light sources blend realistically, even fusing to create white light; smoke billows and dissipates, providing not only atmosphere but sometimes cover and, occasionally, a clue as to what's going on. Metallic surfaces, including the armor breast plates on certain alien baddies, gleam in ambient light and reflect nearby images, and the brightness and quality of the reflective qualities can even provide useful gameplay feedback to a player, such as whether the material in question is cheesy aluminum or impenetrable steel.

Translucent water and energy beams ripple with disturbances (by the player and otherwise—it's not inconceivable that your only hint of an approaching enemy might be the advancing footfalls sloshing through the water toward you!), and luminous force-fields cycle in and out, sometimes creating barriers, sometimes providing temporary bridges and supports for the player to use. Light, like other forms of energy, can be your best friend or your worst enemy—if you're standing in a well-lit corridor and staring into a dark, gaping space, you might well be signalling **Kick Me Please** in huge, neon letters to someone or something lurking hidden in the shadows.

The Sound and the Fury

Sound is as important to a good cinematic project as anything else, and through the nifty graces of real-time digital signal processing (DSP) coded into the game, the widely varying world of *Half-Life*

sounds as good as it looks. 3D stereo effects allow the player to aurally track things as he or she moves around them—or as things move around the player. In addition, the DSP effects provide a greatly enhanced sense of the player's immediate physical environment: The ambient pulse of machinery or the low growls of monsters take on a tinny trill in the confines of air shafts and tight corridors, while gunshots in large rooms reverberate with hollow, booming echoes which suggest cavernous spaces. DSP affects every sound a player hears, or—and this is the insidious part—makes. The *Half-Life* player who wishes to survive would do well to remember that old saying that the walls have ears—and, very likely, eyes, teeth, and tentacles as well....

Preview Half-Life

Want a sneak peek at *Half-Life*? Want to learn more about the monsters and technology? Check out our website at *www.sierra.com/halflife*, where you can download the intense preview AVI.

The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

A word on interpersonal relationships in *Half-Life*: Go blindly pumping rounds into everything that moves and you'll guarantee yourself a harder time. Not every nonhuman is your enemy—some of the things walking, crawling, flying, or flopping around just want to be left alone to go about their inhuman business, and the player who can restrain his or her trigger finger long enough to observe these creatures in their daily routines might just make an important discovery...maybe even an ally, of sorts (that's all I'm gonna say about that).

Indeed, in *Half-Life*, humankind isn't all it's usually cracked up to be—after all, it's human guard patrols who make up at least half of your immediate survival worries. If the character you encounter is human, there's at least a good chance that he won't be happy to see you, and at least another good chance that the biped in question will express his displeasure by taking a shot at you. Remember, all it takes is one bullet, and they've got thousands.

Not only is the enemy heavily armed, but he/she/it can also be dismayingly intelligent and very much in love with the concept of continued existence. Good, indifferent, evil, or just wall-thumpingly stupid, the members of *Half-Life*'s live population want to stay that way, and this more than any other single factor will throw *Dukers* and *Quakers* for a long, rude loop.

These things have a will to live, and where the suicidal hordes of other first-person games will come howling out into the open to be picked off like so many clay pigeons, *Half-Life*'s minions will, given cranial capacity, weigh their options. If a lone, defenseless creature meets you in a clear open space and understands the concept of "gun," it's likely to bolt asses-and-elbows for the nearest exit—wouldn't we all?

On the other hand, a squad of eight army goons who know they have you outnumbered in a cluttered warehouse will adopt viciously efficient SWAT-like tactics against you, with six of them pinning you down with cover-fire while the other two calmly go about flanking you. Flocks of ray-like birds will scatter if threatened, instinctively knowing you can't get them all—unless you use one godlessly destructive weapon, that is. Potential enemies can track you by sight (keep low), sound (keep quiet), motion (keep still), mass (keep dieting), or smell (not a lot you can do here, but double-backing your tracks every now and then wouldn't hurt), and probably one or two others that Valve is keeping as a surprise. In light of what Valve has shown so far, it only makes a game player like me all the more suspicious of what they're not showing.

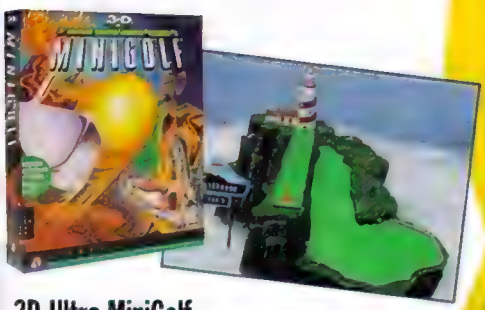
I would remind the trusting that the term "Half-Life" refers to the radioactive decay of elements, usually in an ominous and death-dealing light.

Maybe it's the endless hours I spent in movie theaters as a kid, I don't know, but I need, in fact demand, the cinematic experience. Even a computer game has to grab me by the lapels and shriek earnestly and in my face, "The fate of the world is in your hands. You must act now, and if you fail the Earth will be flushed down some extraterrestrial toilet and it'll all be your fault."

Game players, watch what you demand—games like *Half-Life* will give it to you, and you may never get out of the house again.

Maximum Detail Rendering

Since *Half-Life* is engineered in 16-bit color (offering a potential of more than 16 million colors), light and color can be blended in innumerable ways to get a variety of effects. This lends itself well to textures like metallic surfaces, smoke, rippling water, and energy beams which fade in and out.



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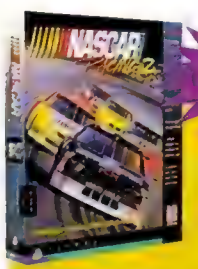

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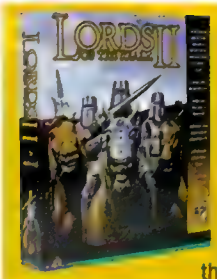

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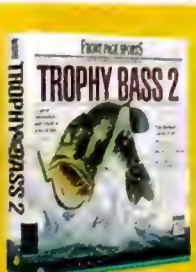

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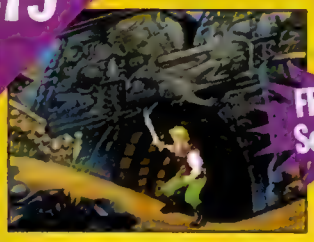

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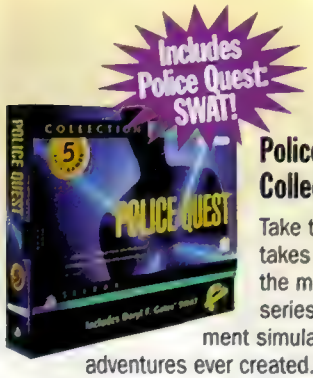

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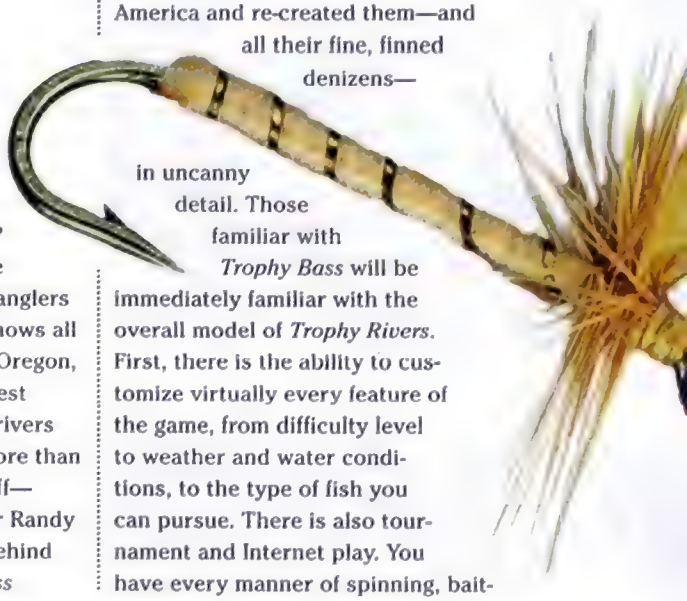
Available: Holiday

By John Sauer

IF YOU COULD take the angling action and excitement of *Trophy Bass* and move it to a new venue, what would it be? Rivers, of course. They're the "other" bodies of water that anglers call home—a fact Dynamix knows all too well. Located in Eugene, Oregon, minutes from some of the finest salmon, and steelhead trout rivers in the world, Dynamix has more than a few die-hard anglers on staff—among them general manager Randy Dersham, the driving force behind *Trophy Bass*. With *Trophy Bass* emerging as such a smash hit, it was only a matter of time before they took cyber-angling to the type of water they know best—rivers.

In creating *Trophy Rivers*, Dynamix has taken five of the most noteworthy "big-fish" rivers in North America and re-created them—and all their fine, finned denizens—in uncanny detail. Those familiar with *Trophy Bass* will be immediately familiar with the overall model of *Trophy Rivers*. First, there is the ability to customize virtually every feature of the game, from difficulty level to weather and water conditions, to the type of fish you can pursue. There is also tournament and Internet play. You have every manner of spinning, bait-



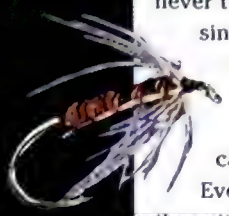
PHOTOS BY DAXN COFFEY

TROPHY RIVERS

"...Plunge pools, tail-outs, the terrain is

Challenge your buddies online in a frantic race to find the best spot, use the best lure, and land the best fish.

Feathers 'n' Fur



When the general press gets wind of *Trophy Rivers*, you can bet your caddis fly that they'll be all over the fly-fishing aspect of the game like a trout on a nymph. Creating a "real-world" simulation of fly-fishing forced the team to take a long, hard look at the true challenges of the sport. "For example, we wracked our brains trying to implement realistic snags on the back cast," Weber says. "But there was no way to do it without taking something more important away from the game. What we put our efforts into was the mend, because while anyone can learn to cast a fly across a river, it's the true experts who can make a dry or wet fly work with the current."

But that doesn't mean the cast is unexceptional. The fly line floats out like Lefty Kreh is holding the rod. While there are a growing number of fishing sims on the market, only Trophy Rivers can claim a fly-fishing model this real. And that alone makes it worth getting.

casting, and fly-fishing tackle available, all brands by top-name tackle manufacturers. There is a bottomless tackle box crammed with everything you can think of to entice fish—and more than a few you never thought of. And since rivers are the venue, you can wade the shallows, use a drift boat, or paddle a canoe to your favorite spots. Even the angling controls are similar, with Autocast for preset ease, or the ability to micromanage all your reel settings.

But where *Trophy Rivers* takes a departure from its predecessor is that in addition to the particular physics of using three markedly different types of fishing tackle, you also have the constantly changing element of running water.

"Getting the water right—that was the toughest challenge we faced," says Steve Letsom, *Trophy Rivers* director. When I interviewed Letsom about the game, he had just returned from a few days of king salmon fishing on the Rogue River. Like most of the other members of the product team, he's an ardent fisherman. "Each river has a different rate of water flow that affects how your line moves. And that movement is constantly changing, whether you're in a boat or on the bank. We took 40-mile stretches of five top fish-producing rivers and recreated them in detail. We've got cutbacks, eddies, plunge pools, tail-outs, riffles—the terrain is ideal," says Randy Dersham, originator of *Trophy Bass*. All told, the game features more than 200 miles of pristine waters to explore, on the Sol Duc, Deschutes, Miramichi, White, and Big Hole Rivers. Even the surrounding terrain and ambient sounds are phenomenally realistic.

The fish are just as lifelike as well, taking into account the factors that motivate stream dwellers, such as hatches, migration patterns, and time of day.

"The fish AI is something we're really proud of," says Kurt Weber, one of the *Trophy Rivers* designers. "It's amazingly difficult to make virtual fish act like real fish. There are over 15 species, and each of them reacts differently. If you move up to a hole too quickly or from the wrong angle, you can spook them right out. They force you to learn the features of the river if you want to catch them. While anyone will be able to use features like Autocast and catch fish right away, only the dedicated will become true masters of the sport."

No Limit on Features

Whatever your river-angling fancy, *Trophy Rivers* will fulfill it with features you expect—and a few that will surprise you. "Fundamental to all of these is the freedom to explore the vast wilderness of each river on your own terms. Stick to the boat, land it and cast from the shore, or even wade

riffles—

out to tip-toe depth and back again. No other fishing game has ever offered such a world of realistic detail and mobility," adds Weber. Of course, the game has solo tourney and career modes, and modem support for head-to-head competitive or cooperative fishing. There is enough variety that you can have a completely new angling experience every time.

ideal!"

— Randy Dereham, originator of *Trophy Bass*

Other unique features include the new online tournament models that have been built into the game, such as "single-fly" fly-fishing tournaments—a first in cyberspace. There is also more multimedia than you can shake a streamer at in the form of How To/Help sections covering everything from tackle to species info and hatch charts. Just looking at the hundreds of flies featured in the tackle box is enough to entice you to get your own fly vice out and tie up a set of nymphs for the opening day of trout season.

Just as *Trophy Bass* has its own set of professional advisors, Dynamix is busy negotiating with river-fishing pros such as Tim Rajeff—though they're keeping their complete pro and licensed tackle lineup close to their chest. Whether you want to finesse a light tippet and a dry fly over a pool or Kwikfish™ through a deep hole, *Trophy Rivers* has something to get you on the water.

Trophy Rivers puts you in the boat, baiting, and battling the mightiest fish.

Fly casting takes a lot of practice and concentration to master.

Catch that elusive salmon or trout with the right fly and rod.

Legendary Rivers

Most river anglers would give their eyeteeth for a chance to fish these rivers.

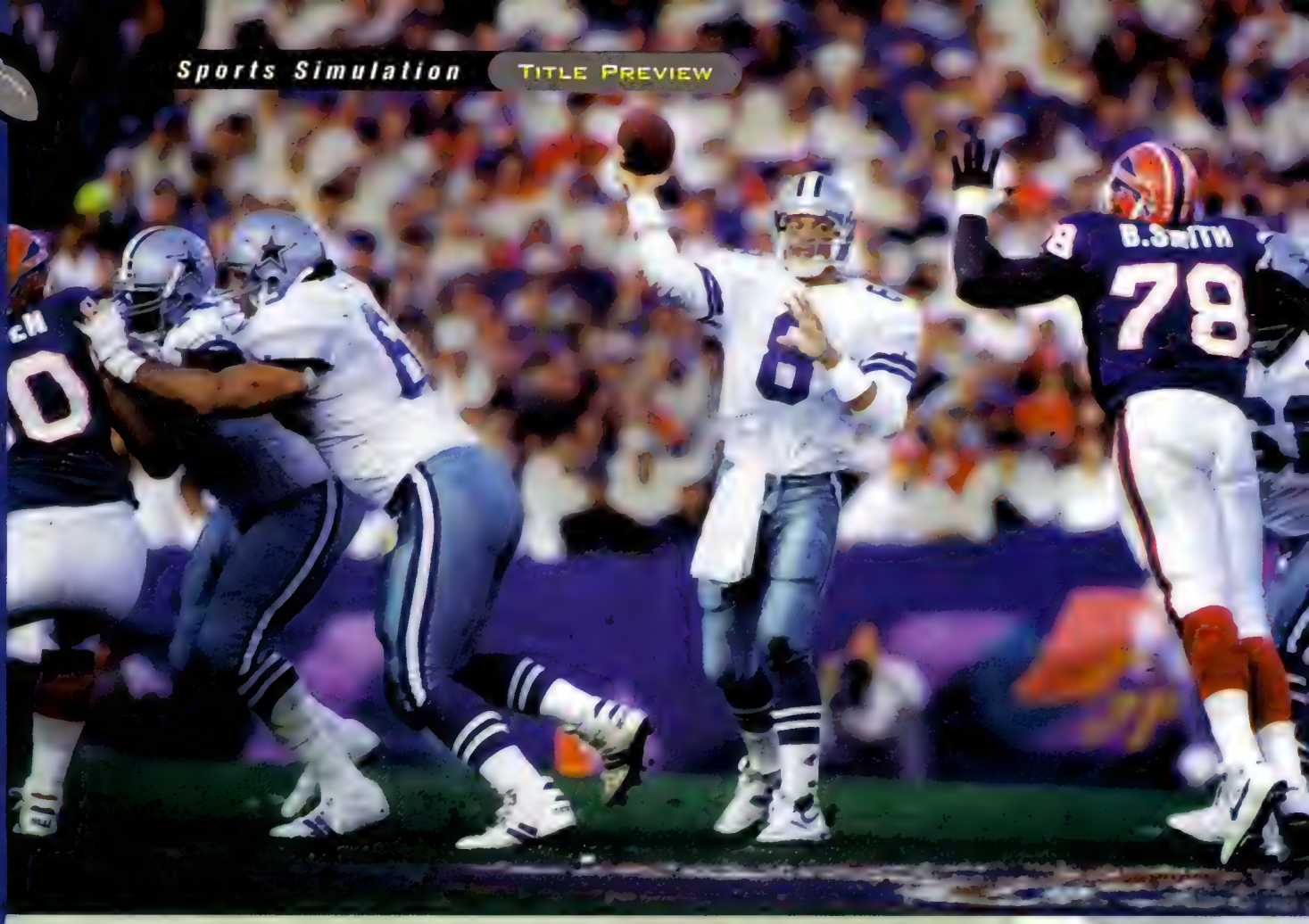
Deschutes River, Oregon
It is known for superb rainbow trout fishing, with seasonal runs of salmon and bruiser steelhead trout. Great drift-boat water with some very rough rapids.

Miramichi River, New Brunswick
This East Coaster offers runs of rare Atlantic salmon and slab-sided sea-run brookies. The Miramichi is known as canoe heaven.

White River, Arkansas
This South-Central river is famous for its world-class brown trout. It's perfect for wading and canoeing.

Big Hole River, Montana
The mountainous Big Sky country is home to this river's mountain brown, rainbow, and cutthroat trout. Perfect for wading and stalking; a drift boat wouldn't be out of place here.

Sol Duc River, Washington
Located on the Olympic Peninsula, the Sol Duc is home to runs of monstrous chinook and coho salmon, as well as trophy steelhead trout. While it's seemingly made for drift boats, many good spots behind the rapids can be accessed by waders.



The FPS: Football Pro series has been named sports sim of the year over and over again. The designers of Football Pro '98 promise this will be the best yet.

FPS: Football Pro '98

www.sierra.com/**fb98**

Preferred System Requirements
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Format
WIN95 CD

Price
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By David Senan

VINCE LOMBARDI, THE legendary coach of the Green Bay Packers, once said, "There is no room for second place. There is only one place in my game and that's first place." Along with millions of sports fans around the world, the designers of Sierra's *Front Page Sports: Football Pro* series have listened. The accolades have piled high as the *Football Pro* series has won just about every industry and media award since its release in 1994. But, rather than resting on their laurels and accepting the praise from both the media and sports sim fans alike, each development team has worked hard to make their game better than the last. With the introduction of *Football Pro '98* this fall, the sim promises to be the most complete football simulation to date.

"THERE IS *no* ROOM FOR *second* PLACE. THERE IS ONLY *one* PLACE IN MY GAME AND THAT'S *FIRST* PLACE."
—VINCE LOMBARDI

The reason that everyone involved in the development of *Football Pro '98* is so excited is because the latest incarnation of the *Football Pro* series reflects the wants and needs of users everywhere. There has been a major push to overhaul the graphical user interface (GUI) to make the simulation even more intuitive and easier to use. There's been a complete reworking of the arcade mode to make sitting down and playing head to head a lot more fun. Additionally, Sierra's added a "TV-style"

Going Deep and Reaching Paydirt

presentation that features voice-overs from famous football play-by-play guy Howard David—to bring the game into "prime time." And, as always, all of the stats, teams, players, and stadiums have been updated so what you see on TV every Sunday is exactly what you'll see every time you sit in front of your computer. Desktop quarterbacks, rejoice—it's time to lace up your cleats and hit the gridiron. It's time for *Football Pro '98*.

GUI Made Easy

Since the brunt of the design and development for *Football Pro '98* has moved to the Synergistic Software division of Sierra, the look of the sim has been completely overhauled. This metamorphosis has occurred as the result of many requests and suggestions from the hundreds of thousands of *Football Pro* users from all over the world who feel that ease of use is almost as important as a complete palette of realistic features.

"We've heard from many users that a lot of the features (in previous versions of the sim) take too many mouse clicks and that some of the functionality of the GUI was not laid out in the most logical fashion—specifically those dealing with leagues and commissioner functions," *Football Pro '98* producer Mike Branham explains. "Our goal was to lay out each screen logically and to make easily accessible the functions needed for each screen."

Enhanced Arcade Play

Another feature that has the *Football Pro* community buzzing is the reworking of the arcade mode. For a long time, sports simulations have based themselves completely on realism, and this has sometimes cost users a certain element of fun that comes with the down-and-dirty scrum of fast-action arcade play. Sometimes even the most devout sim fans want to quickly grind it out head to head against other users. Of course, Internet play is still a key feature making for diverse leagues that are formed and governed completely online. The enhanced arcade mode makes it even easier to play a not-so-friendly game over the Internet.

"We've had many useful suggestions from our fans on issues ranging from changes in how specific players on the defensive line read an offensive play, to implementing obscure NFL rules, to placement and movement of the cameras," Branham explains. "Simply put, we've listened, and the results are astounding."

We Heard That

As a rule, all of Sierra's development teams have been listening to beta testers and users of existing games to improve games and make them functionally acceptable to the people who matter the most—the customers. To that end, *Football Pro '98* is no exception. User suggestions from casual players, to league commissioners, to aspiring programmers who punch out code for useful utilities and add-ons have been received, considered, and implemented throughout the sim. There are thousands and thousands of users out there, and giving them what they want and need in a football simulation is the development team's primary focus.

"The *Football Pro* series has a very strong following," Branham says. "But so far most of the utility writers (hobbyist programmers) have broken our file formats and written quite a few great add-on utilities. We feel that if we release the proper file formats and make them available on the Web, even better utilities will begin to show up."

New Camera Angles: What good would improved arcade play be without multiple new camera angles to cover all the action?

Right on the *Football Pro '98* website, **www.sierra.com/fb98/** – there is an open letter to utilities and add-on writers and any *Football Pro* users who would like to share their ideas and suggestions with the development team. In the letter Branham states clearly, "Sierra's policy has always been not to give out internal programming data. We would like to change this policy as it applies to *Football Pro '98*. We would like to encourage third-party utilities that support *FPS: Football*. So, we will help those working on such utilities by sharing game data structures and by promoting those utilities that users find most useful." Now, if that's not user-friendly development, what is?

The development team is also listening to the commissioners of *Football Pro* leagues to make the interface even more useful to them as they preside over leagues both on the Internet and off.

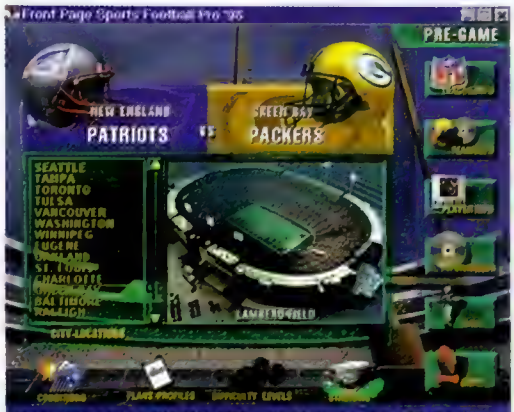
"More and more leagues are being run on the Internet," Branham says. "I'd like to see thousands of leagues running through GameFrontier (Sierra's online interactive gaming system*). I've been in contact with lots of commissioners, because there are so many different ways to run a league. We're adding several features that will help automate the process. In fact, the exact list of features is being worked out with a group of beta testers who are veteran league commissioners," Branham says proudly. Sounds like the team is not just hearing these suggestions but listening to them and proceeding with intelligent, intuitive implementation.

Show Me the Money

There are many new features and thousands of feature enhancements that have gone into making *Football Pro '98* the most exciting simulation yet in the *Front Page Sports* series. There's a new push for a "TV-style" presentation in sports games (these days—that's realism for you). *Football Pro '98* delivers by adding play-by-play voice-overs from CBS Radio's Howard David. Sierra's also added numerous new camera angles replicating the real views used by the TV networks that have been broadcasting pro football games for decades. Additionally, all of the statistics, teams, players, and stadiums from the 1997 season have been added. All of the 30 NFL stadiums are meticulously 3D-modeled, and there is even a feature that allows users to update statistics instantly. There are even photos of each team's 1996–97 rosters showing that if they're in the NFL, they're in *Football Pro '98*.

Football Pro '98 is not simply an upgrade to the existing line of Sierra's *Football Pro* series. This sim boasts dramatic improvements to the GUI, the functionality of the arcade mode, and the implementation of features that are important to the people that matter most—the users. Sierra can scream and shout all we want that this is an even better product than past versions of *Football Pro*. But by coupling one of Sierra's most realistic sims with an aggressive price point of $29.95, we're putting our money where our collective mouth is. Check out *Football Pro '98*—you really can't lose.

INTERFACE ENHANCEMENTS: A completely redesigned front end makes the interface more intuitive and much easier to use.



STADIUMANIA: All 30 NFL stadiums are 3D modeled from the 50 yard line all the way up to the last seats in Peanut Heaven.

**Editor's Note: Read more about Sierra's GameFrontier in the Holiday issue of* InterAction *this November.*

PRIME TIME: Howard David, CBS Radio sports announcer, calls all the play-by-play action.

EAT YOUR HEART OUT MADDEN

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Howard David, CBS Radio Sports play-by-play announcer brings a whole new dimension to *FPS: Football Pro '98* with his play-by-play voice-overs. David calling the play-by-play gives *Football '98* a "prime time" feel. David is an 18-year veteran of CBS Radio Sports and has covered everything from the NFL and U.S. Open tennis championship to Olympic speedskating. David has been honored as the New Jersey Sportscaster of the Year (1975 and 1985) by the Association of Sportscasters and Sportswriters. The radio voice of Princeton football since 1975, he's also currently the voice of the NBA's Boston Celtics and has handled Major League Baseball play-by-play for CBS since 1987.

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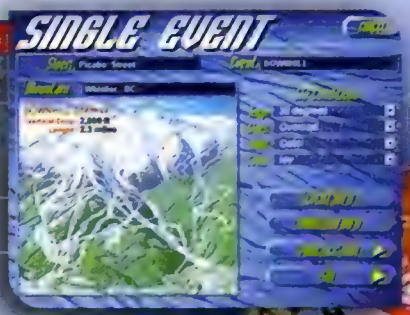

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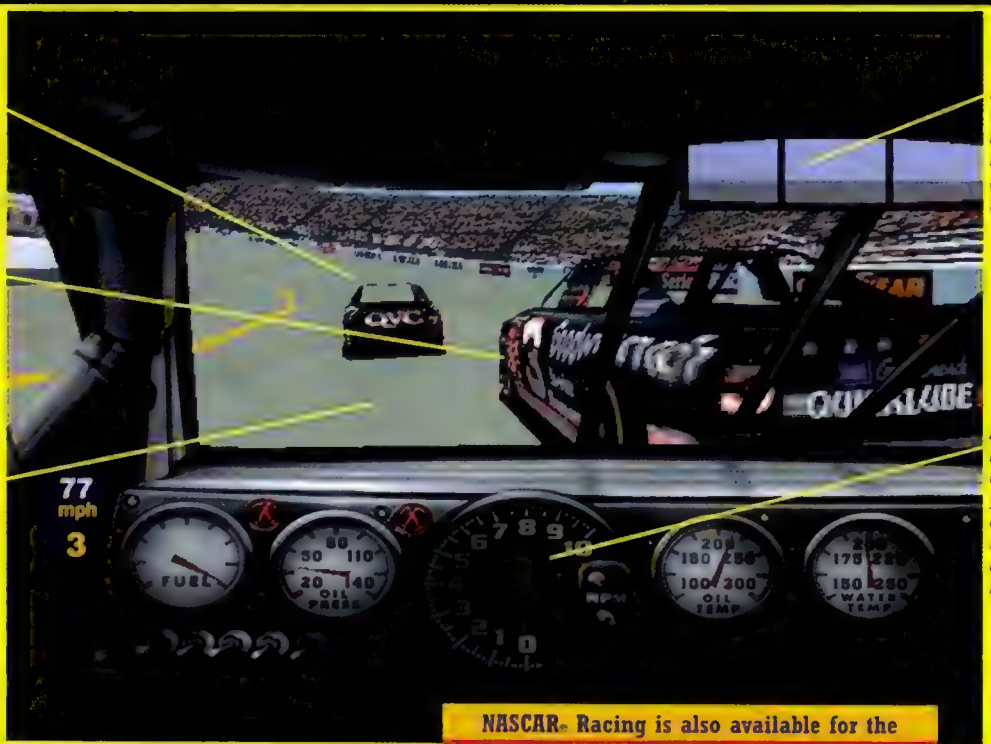

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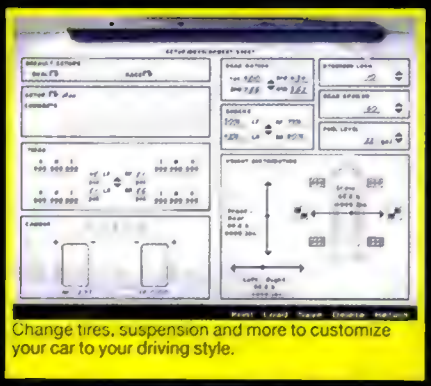
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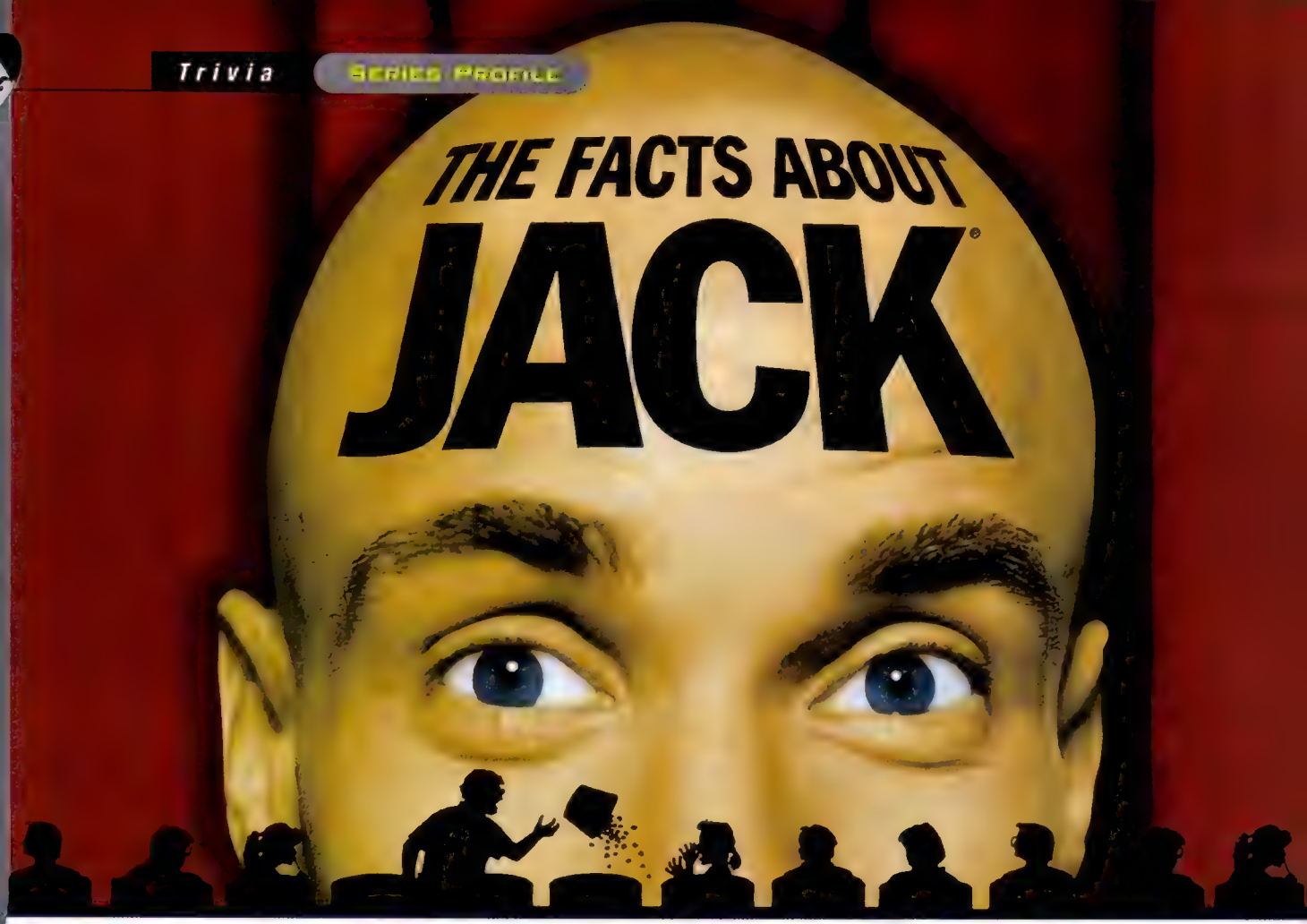
THE FACTS ABOUT JACK®



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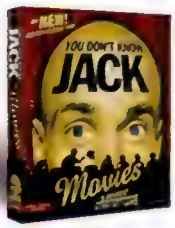

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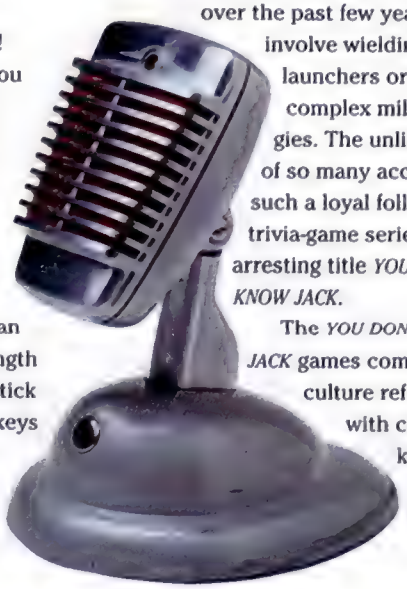
By Jeffrey Young

[H]EY, YOU! YEAH, you with the joystick. Isn't it time you stopped pretending to be some hotshot mercenary who can decimate supernatural forces with your brute strength? After all, an infant possesses the strength it takes to move that joystick around and punch a few keys on the keyboard. Wanna know what kind of game separates the adults from the children? The kind that tests your wits, like, say, trivia games. And since the wittiest trivia games in town make up the acclaimed *YOU DON'T KNOW JACK* series, maybe you should set your joystick aside, take a deep breath, and learn a little bit more about *JACK*.



If YOU DON'T KNOW JACK!

Surprisingly, one of the most acclaimed and popular computer games to emerge over the past few years doesn't involve wielding grenade launchers or planning complex military strategies. The unlikely winner of so many accolades and such a loyal following is the trivia-game series with the arresting title *YOU DON'T KNOW JACK*.

The *YOU DON'T KNOW JACK* games combine pop-culture references with classical knowledge in a television trivia-game show

PUT IT IN GEAR

NOW! ['CAUSE HERE WE GO.]

playing *JACK*, one to three contestants crowd around a keyboard, ready to press their "buzzer" key after the computer host asks a question. This simple concept has proven to be a winning formula for Berkeley Systems and Jellyvision, co-creators of the series. But how has a simple trivia game earned such high praise from critics and excitement from game players?

Certainly one reason for *JACK*'s success is the irreverent humor that permeates the games.

See JACK Laugh

From the get-go, *JACK* aims squarely at players' funny bones with lively backstage banter between the show's host and the stage crew. Even though the player sees only a sign-in screen, the illusion of preshow preparations is created through candid conversations of the crew interspersed with pseudo-lingo like, "Can you bring me a 9mm flying wing-joint?"

The fantastic illusion that's happening here is you feel like you're privy to the inner workings of a television show, when in fact you're sitting at your computer, which is feverishly swapping the tasks of searching out and playing audio bits from the disk. Once the game gets started, the humor in *JACK* really begins to take shape. The snide, fast-talking host sets the tone for the game by delivering his lines in an understated style that lets the uproarious questions speak for themselves. From Boris Yeltsin's colon to the mating rituals of newts, nothing is sacred in the question and answer choices of *JACK*.

The Hook

Beyond embracing these taboo subjects, what really gives *JACK* its hook is the ungodly marriage of pop culture and classic trivia. For instance, a question from *YOU DON'T KNOW JACK Volume 2* asks, "Which of the following would not be a piece in a giant game of fast-food chain chess? —burger KING, dairy QUEEN, JACK in the box, or white CASTLE?" The answer, of course, is "Jack in the Box" because there is no "Jack" in chess. But what is funny here is that the writers have coupled knowledge of the names of fast-food chains with a simple question about the playing pieces in chess. The writing in *JACK* can be so entertaining that, even if you are losing miserably, you can still have an enjoyable time laughing at the ingenious questions. How many other games can claim that they are fun to play, even if you lose?

Another unique and essential element of the *JACK* experience is speed. *JACK* hops quickly from singing introduction (e.g., "Oh, thank heaven for question SEVEN"), to the question itself, and only allows a few seconds of cognitive time before it's too late to answer. By the time you're done laughing about a particular question, you may have already missed the

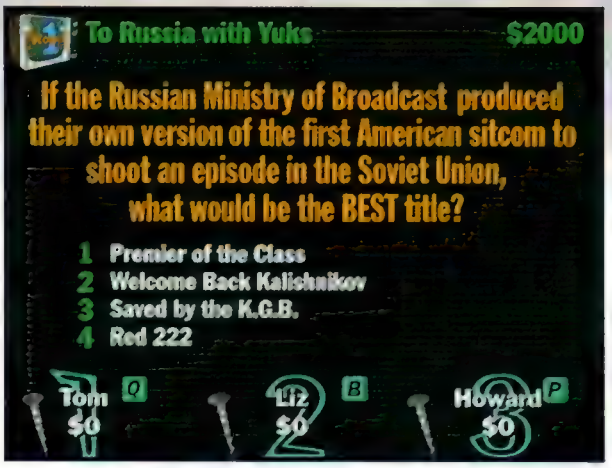
next one. This frenetic pace adds a sense of urgency to *JACK* that keeps players glued to their screens, afraid to blink, for fear of missing a funny quip or an essential bit of information.

The final aspect of this game that *JACK*-oholics find so addictive is that of social gaming. When playing *JACK* with three people, you're forced to crowd around a keyboard, elbow to armpit. While many games tout Net-based multiple-player capabilities, *JACK* is one of the few PC games that enable your opponents to be at the same computer as you.

Playing *JACK* as a single player can be an entertaining experience, but the three-player games add much more fun to the mix. Name calling, taunting, and pinching are all tactics I have employed at one time or another when playing multiplayer *JACK*. A multiplayer built-in hazing device in *JACK* is the Screw Your Neighbor option. This option works very simply by forcing one of your opponents to answer a question.

If a tough question is asked, and you think one of your opponents doesn't know it, you can buzz in, press the "S" (as in screw) key, and then press the number of the screw-ee. The Screw tool can backfire, though: If the screw-ee answers the question correctly, then the screw-er gets points subtracted from his or her score.

With all these antics, if you happen to have more than three players in your crowded computer room, *JACK* can be almost as much fun to watch as it is to play. Honestly, *JACK* is one of only a few computer games that could be played within a social setting.



The Praise

Apparently, others also find the *YOU DON'T KNOW JACK* series endearing. It has won an amazing 34 industry awards, among them the prestigious Computer Game Developers' Association Spotlight Award; *PC Gamer*'s Hall of Fame award; *Computer Life*'s Best of Everything, Best Software, Best Game, and five out of five stars award; *Family PC*'s Top-Rated After-Hours Game; and *HomePC*'s Editor's Choice. It is very rare for a game, especially in the trivia game category, to receive such an overwhelmingly positive response from the crotchety ol' journalism community.

But journalists aren't the only ones who are all *JACK*ed up. For the last year and a half, there has been a *YOU DON'T KNOW JACK* game in the top 10 best-sellers list. That means hundreds of thousands of regular folks have gone out and bought a little piece of *JACK*.

Hey JACK, Your Roots Are Showing

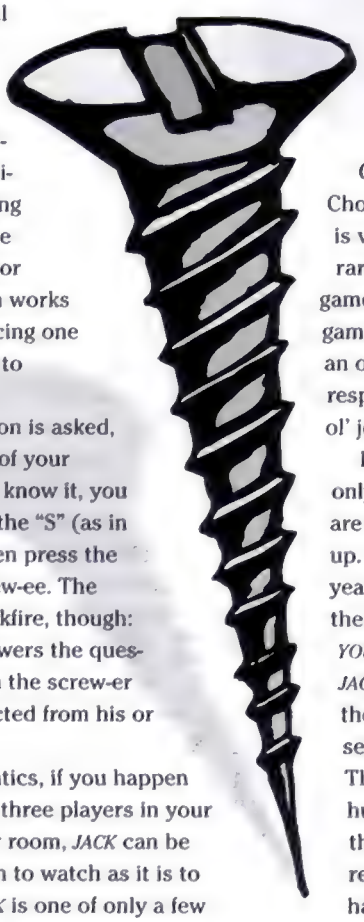
Okay, *JACK* historians, here's an attempt to trace the recent, yet convoluted lineage of everybody's favorite computer trivia game with an insulting name. *YOU DON'T KNOW JACK* started as a single product that was released in October 1995 with 800 questions. Because of its popularity, an add-on question pack with more questions was released in March '96. At the same time, newbies who hadn't experienced the greatness of *JACK* could purchase *YOU DON'T KNOW JACK XL*, which combined the original recipe with the add-on questions. Then, following in the footsteps of great trivia board-game companies, Berkeley Systems released *YOU DON'T KNOW JACK Sports* in fall 1996.

The sports-theme *JACK* was built on the same technology as the original game and featured the same question types but, as the name obviously denotes, all the questions were sports-related. Also in the fall of 1996, another full-blown *JACK*-fest was released in *YOU DON'T KNOW JACK Volume 2*, which featured more question types than the first game, including Picture, Fill in the Blank, Whatshisname, DisorDat, and the incredibly funny Celebrity Collect Call

[SCREW]

[YOUR]

[NEIGHBOR!]



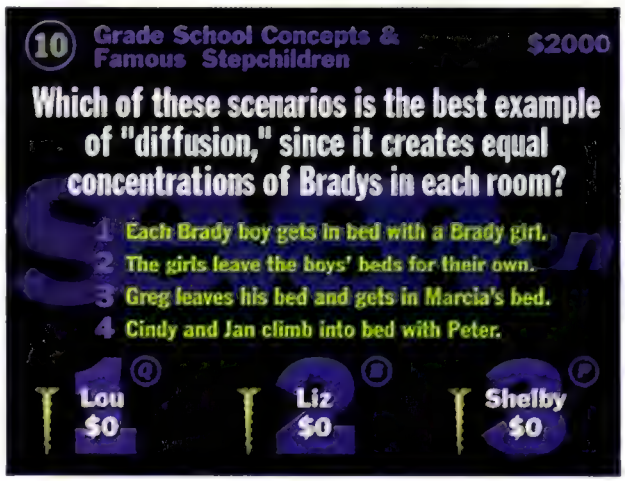


Illustration by: Mike Sinkula

questions. Also, *Volume 2* featured tons of fancy new graphics, more animation than the previous *JACK* products, and loads of original sound effects and gags (not to mention an extremely well-crafted user manual).

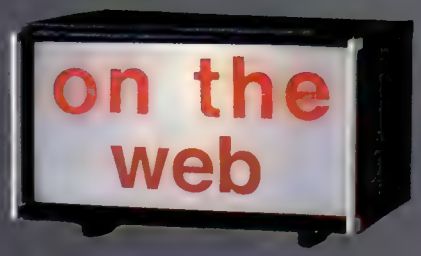
Within weeks of *Volume 2*'s release, *YOU DON'T KNOW JACK XXL*, a compilation of *JACK XL* and *Volume 2*, hit the shelves. Realizing that *JACK* fans really must enjoy spending time on their posteriors, the assumption was made that they also enjoyed seeing that same thing in front of a silver screen. So, a second theme-oriented *JACK* was spawned in spring 1997: *YOU DON'T KNOW JACK Movies*. This game featured all the question types from *Volume 2*, but this time—you guessed it—all the questions related to motion pictures. All of the artwork, animation, and question intros were updated in this movie-buff stumper to relate to the cinematic theme. Now that those of you who have been living on another planet for the past two years have been brought up to speed, and you *JACK*-ophiles have been, well, bored stiff, let's take a peek at what's in store for *JACK* this fall.

The Next JACK Things

In October, Berkeley Systems will once again be able to claim "*JACK*'s Back." This time, gamers will have two brand-new games to savor: *YOU DON'T KNOW JACK TV* and *YOU DON'T KNOW JACK Volume 3*. Couch potatoes, rejoice; the television-themed product is the third theme-pack addition to the *JACK* family of products. It will include all the question types found in *YOU DON'T KNOW JACK Movies* and it will test your knowledge of 50 years of tele-trivia. *YOU DON'T KNOW JACK Volume 3* will feature all the popular question types from *Volumes 1* and *2* with the addition of Threesomes (speed rounds like DisorDats, but for multiple players), Impossible Questions (real toughies that will be worth major points), and the Super Audio Question. The requisite compilation pack will also be released with *Volume 3*, *YOU DON'T KNOW JACK Huge (XXXL)*, which will contain *JACK Volumes 1-3*.

Editor's Note:

This past spring, Berkeley Systems officially joined the Sierra family, making us at *InterAction* even luckier than before. Finally, we won't get in trouble when our boss catches us playing *YOU DON'T KNOW JACK* over our network. It's easy to call *JACK* our brother—it feels like we've known him forever.



See JACK Web

If you've never played *JACK*, or if you devour these games faster than the producers can make 'em, then point your browser to www.bezerk.com and play *YOU DON'T KNOW JACK The Netshow* through Berkeley System's online entertainment zone, beZerk. Here you'll also find a sports-oriented *JACK Netshow*. Both shows have updated questions on a weekly basis, so the topics are fresh from the news (*Weekly World News*) headlines. On your first visit, you'll need to download some front-end software, but after that, it's as easy to play as going to beZerk online and pressing a button.

As a landmark Web-based game, *JACK Netshow* re-creates much of the feeling of the CD-ROM-based series, but requires little more than an online connection and a browser to play. To ensure that the quality of the *Netshow* questions are consistent with the CD-ROM products, Jellyvision's John Boyden, who served as head writer for the first game and director and producer for the subsequent games, is heading up the writing and creative aspects of the *Netshow*.

Commercials for the Apocalypse

Even though *YOU DON'T KNOW JACK* is modeled after television trivia-game shows, there are no commercial interruptions in the CD-ROM games. But just for fun, the games' creative teams included in the CD-ROMs some bogus commercials of fictitious products and services that play after the JACK Attack round of each game. There are ads for fake toys (like Mr. Sticky Buddy) and phone-chat lines, but the most popular commercials feature a silly group of breakfast cereals and their mascot, Chocky the Chipmunk.

According to Jellyvision's John Boyden, "The commercials are all written, recorded, and mixed by our writers! Making a commercial is a writer's baptism into the world of audio production."

On the future of commercial production within *JACK*, Boyden states, "We are producing our first 10-second fake ad with animation to air on *The Netshow*." The ad will be interspersed with the real ads that appear on the Netshow from high-profile advertisers like 7-Up. "If people like it," Boyden adds, "we'll be following it with many more."

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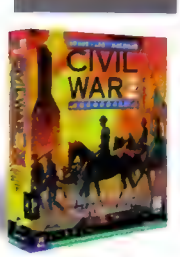
Robert E. Lee Sworn In as 17th President

Civil War Generals 2 designer Doug Gonya shares his thoughts and raises the question, "Is this guy a game designer or a historian?" Fact is, he's very much both.

Civil War Generals 2

www.sierra.com/**civilwar2**



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By Doug Gonya

IN HIS FIRST State of the Union address, President Robert E. Lee implored, "All citizens of these Confederate States, look toward the future and learn from the past." What might have been. *Civil War Generals 2: Grant, Lee, Sherman* is the eagerly awaited sequel to the successful *Robert E. Lee: Civil War General*.

Civil War Generals 2 breaks new strategy gaming ground by allowing you to set the course of the war through tactical victories and defeats at the individual battles and situations; thus the war will be different every time you play. Your skills as a hardened battlefield commander will determine a new course of history, thanks to this innovation in campaign play.

Rewrite history as either a Confederate or Union general fighting through multiple campaigns and battles in either the eastern or western theaters—the sites of our nation's bloodiest war.

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Jackson Captures Harpers Ferry

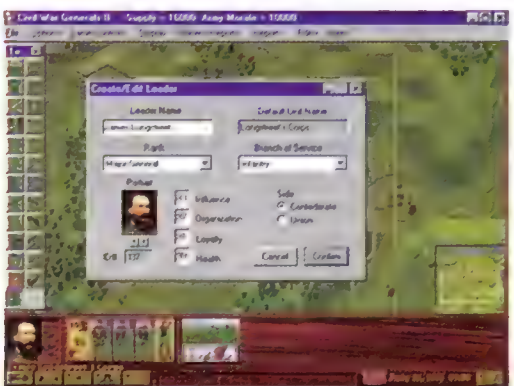
CWG 2 builds on the foundations of its predecessor and brings the importance of strategic decisions within tactical battles to unprecedented heights. Now you can play as the North or South and represent either Lee, Grant, Sherman, or Jackson. Winning battles is now as important as preserving the fighting strength of your army.

The sequence of battles your general will fight through is determined by how successful he is in each of his individual battles.

For example, playing as Stonewall Jackson, if you perform better than he did during the Shenandoah Valley campaign, you may have a chance to take Harpers Ferry. However, if Jackson is crushed, Union troops will be released from guarding Washington and sent to join McClellan's army on the Peninsula.

ing which battle to fight next. For instance, after a major Confederate victory at Gettysburg, you will be asked whether or not you wish to advance to Washington. A victory in the capital could end the war, but the odds are stacked against you. Obviously a defeat here gains you nothing and can shatter the strength of yourarmy. Either way, taking such a gamble will likely result in a shorter war.

Many of my men died on that battle field. They bled with their brothers and their enemies alike.



The powerful editor allows you to create your own maps and scenarios that link your battles.

Your scouts return with news of approaching Union troops. Do you retreat or stay and fight?

Which leads to an interesting question: Would Lee have been victorious in the Seven Days' Battles if Jackson had failed in the Shenandoah? McClellan would not have been deprived of the Union troops he needed to protect his exposed right flank on the Peninsula (almost guaranteeing his defeat), and the course of the war would have definitely taken a new turn. Play *CWG 2*, and find out for yourself.

Extensive Replay Value

The heart and soul of *CWG 2* lies in its campaigns. All of the combat takes place at the tactical level, but it is the strategic implications of these combats that will have you playing into the wee hours of the night. Each of the historical campaigns in *CWG 2* branches out depending on the victory level achieved in each battle. With up to five branches stemming from every battle, *CWG 2* offers immense replay value. In addition, you will occasionally be presented with difficult strategic choices regard-

Battles Are Won Covering the Details

All-new graphics have been created for *CWG 2*, featuring highly detailed maps and expanded new terrain types. Open water and coastlines allow naval movement. Swamps and rocky knolls hinder movement but provide cover at the expense of the health and organization of your troops. Walls, forts, and even ruins provide much better cover for your main line of battle. Major roads and pontoon bridges increase the mobility of your army. There are even "road signs" that label important battlefield features.

The new zoom level (fully playable) will show the attention to detail that has gone into *CWG 2*. The powerful editor included in the game will allow you to create your own maps and scenarios that you can link into branching campaigns. You can even exchange these created scenarios over the Internet.

Objective hexes are included in the maps, too. However, unlike other games where victory is determined solely by possession of these locations at the end of the scenario, these will instead give a small infusion of victory

General Ulysses S. Grant

General Robert E. Lee

General William T. Sherman

points every turn they are held. And, as with *Robert E. Lee*, *CWG 2* is enhanced with multimedia film footage from award-winning filmmaker Jay Wertz and stunning original artwork from historical artist Mort Kunstler.

The Difficult Job of Victory

Victory in Civil War battles in *Robert E. Lee* was primarily determined by forcing the opposing army from the field. *CWG 2* reflects that reality by having the most victory points awarded for causing casualties and gaining ground. The value of a location will grow depending on how often it is fought over, even if it had no value whatsoever at the beginning of a scenario. After all, even such universally well-known "important" positions such as Little Round Top and Culp's Hill would have had little value if they had not anchored the flanks of the Union army at Gettysburg.

Many new unit types have been introduced in *CWG 2*, allowing for more choices and a much more realistic simulation of the battlefield experience in the Civil War. The various headquarters provide a rallying point for broken units and will have an effect on all of the actions of units under their command.

Engineers provide a means of changing the terrain on the battlefield. Pontoon bridges may be built or blown up, and forts may be destroyed. Naval units, such as frigates, gunboats, and mortar gunboats, can support troops on land, provided they can suppress the artillery fire from siege guns in coastal forts.

Weapons of War

Over 60 weapon types may be purchased between battles in campaign games. Artillery and, of course, artillery duels play an expanded role in *CWG 2*. Mobile horse artillery, if used wisely, can keep up a continual fire even against mobile enemy columns.

Fearsome siege guns in heavy artillery units will dominate vast areas within their field of fire, but don't even think about relocating these behemoths. Mortars and, to some extent, howitzers with their indirect fire capabilities will be able to fire at any enemy units within their range.

History in the Making

All of the best features from *Robert E. Lee* were used and expanded for *CWG 2*. The game includes significant features such as enhanced maps plus additional terrain were added to raise the level of gameplay. The more you play *CWG 2*, the more you'll appreciate these improvements.

Civil War Generals: 2 covers much more of the war, in greater detail, than *Robert E. Lee*, yet itis even easier to learn and more fun to play. So whether you're a son of Dixie or a die-hard Yankee, the battle of the blue and gray will never be the same. You have the power to change the course of history as we know it.

The zoom option allows you to keep an eye on the enemy and plan your battle strategy.

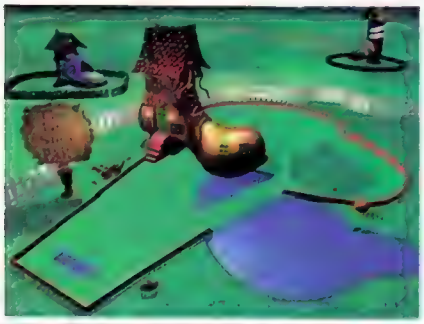
Courageous leadership and strategic planning give you an edge over your adversaries.

IT'S GOT THE WINDMILL, THE BIG SHOE AND THEN OUR IMAGINATIONS GOT THE BEST OF US.

3-D Ultra-Mini Golf™ is all the fun you'd expect from the game of mini golf with a little something extra.

A wild ride through the right side of the brain.

You get two, nine-hole courses. One with classic mini golf holes like the big shoe, the windmill. The other nine holes are totally nutty. There's the space port where you can putt on the moon, the volcano where your ball can be incinerated in molten lava and a prehistoric jungle where the Tyrannosaurus Rex has developed a taste for golf balls.



It's weird, wild and more fun than a whoopee cushion.

3-D Ultra Mini Golf gives you incredibly realistic ball physics that make even the most radical bank-shots possible. You can play it alone or with as many as four players.

3-D Ultra Mini Golf. Call it cool. Call it amazing. Just don't call it normal.

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IT'S ALL IN YOUR HANDS

By Paul Quinn

WHEN MY EDITOR at *InterAction* asked me to write a review on joysticks, I was more than happy to oblige. He told me they wanted an honest review of several popular joysticks from someone with the technical knowledge to offer solid information to their readers. I have been with Sierra's Technical Support department for over two years now, and I have dealt with every type of game controller on the market.

Normally Sierra's Tech Support doesn't offer a specific recommendation for any piece of hardware, because something that works well for one person may be a paperweight for someone else. I am not writing this as a Tech Support technician. I just happen to be a person with years of PC experience who's been asked to give an opinion on some joysticks. The final decision on what type of joystick to buy is up to you.

What to Look For in a Stick

When you're looking at a joystick you should always consider the four Fs: features, functionality, flyability, and feel.

- Features cover the controller's capability. Is it simply a two-button two-axis basic model (which is plenty for some folks), or does it have 83 fully programmable buttons, six point-of-view hats, five axes, force feedback, and a beer tap?
- Functionality is how well the features work. Is it easy to program, or do you need an engineering degree to get the thing going? Are the features usable or just glitter?
- Flyability is how the stick responds while playing a game. Is it nimble or sluggish?
- Feel is how the joystick feels. Is it solid or do you feel like you're going to snap it off? Does it stay put on your desk or skitter around like a gerbil on diet pills? Is it comfortable? Does it give you blisters after 12 hours of *Silent Thunder*? Remember, you are going to be gripping this thing for a long time, and sick leave doesn't cover "stick wrist."

I tried three top joysticks for this review—the Extreme Digital by Logitech, the EagleMax by ACT LABS, and the Millenium 3D Inceptor from Thrustmaster—and ran them through hours of vigorous testing in the Sierra Labs. I selected several Sierra titles to put these bad boys through their paces: *A-10 Silent Thunder*, *Classic Red Baron*, *Aces Over Europe*, *Sierra Pro Pilot*, and *Red Baron II*.

Features

All these controllers had a hat switch, throttle control, and at least four buttons. The Extreme Digital and Millenium 3D have six

joystick buttons, and the EagleMax boasts six joystick buttons and 10—count 'em, 10—hyper-programmable buttons located just behind the stick itself, for a total of 16 buttons in all. All six of Extreme Digital's and Millenium's joystick buttons are programmable, whereas EagleMax only lets you customize two, not including the hyper buttons. The Millenium also has rudder control with a twist of the stick, something the other two lack.

Functionality

For today's flight sims, you gotta be able to program your joystick. If you have to take the time to look at your keyboard before you select a weapon or fire a flare, you're going to be sucking gravel before you can say Baron Von "Thud."

The Extreme Digital has fairly intuitive Windows-based programming software, and it lets you save as many profiles as you like.

The EagleMax scored big on the programming angle. Here is the procedure—follow it if you can: Move a switch on the stick to SETUP. Hold down the button on the stick you wish to program. Hit the keystroke you want programmed in. Move the switch back. Done! No software to deal with and you can program it while you play. You can also program up to 10 keystrokes per button for multikey moves—handy in fighting games (such as *Silent Thunder*) or switching between ground targets and launching Maverick missiles. I took out seven ground-based, dirt-sucking scumballs with one touch of the button. Nifty. While this feature is nice, it has its drawbacks, too. First, you can't program the first four joystick buttons, and second, you can only save four groups of settings.

Thrustmaster's Millenium 3D also has Windows-based programming software. It is more intuitive than the Extreme Digital, and features a graphical representation of the stick with a clickable interface. All six buttons on the Millenium are programmable as keystrokes or "Joystick Buttons," which means you can set the joystick buttons, trigger, thumb, etc., for your personal tastes and not be stuck with the game defaults.

Flyability

I had heard good things about the Extreme Digital from co-workers but, frankly, I was disappointed. I found the response time sluggish while flying. There was a noticeable delay between executing a turn and game response. I thought it might be a problem with a particular game, but it was true for all of them.

EagleMax was on the other end of the spectrum. While it was crisp, it tended to be, pardon me, flighty. It was so touchy, that at times I had trouble flying my Cessna and lining up on a target. I also had to recalibrate several times.

The Millenium responded nicely while maneuvering and firing, and offered an added bonus: I never had to recalibrate.

Feel

This is the biggie for me. Spending a week's pay on a great joystick (with lots of buttons and knobs and 8x10 color glossy photographs with circles and arrows) doesn't mean jack if you kill every nerve in your thumb when you spend four hours trying to take down that Fokker.

The Extreme Digital was comfortable, but its smoothly contoured design is built for a slightly larger hand than mine. I hope you have the "oomph" to go with that larger appendage—you'll need it. I think the springs in the Extreme were made for a Chevy pickup. It's quite a workout using it for any length of time. While I am sure this strength of spring will add years to the life of the stick, it proved frustrating. The heavy base helped, but I think if you welded the sucker to your desk so you could really throw some abuse at it, then it would be an excellent choice.

The handle for the EagleMax

is artistically designed in the shape of a stylized eagle. Actually, it looks a lot like the Maltese Falcon, and I kept expecting Peter Lorre to walk in and search my cubicle. This, plus a very light base, made the EagleMax feel cheap and flimsy. However, the grip was surprisingly comfortable and the wide base helped compensate for the lack of mass. It also has a very wide throw (similar to shifting a small Italian sports car), which took some getting used to.

Speaking of getting used to something, the Millenium 3D Inceptor was something else. The Millenium is designed after the controller used on the space shuttle (also built by Thrustmaster, but costing a little bit more). It uses what they call Knuckle Roll Over for the Y-axis. This means you just move your wrist, not your arm, when you use this stick. It takes a time getting used to, and, frankly, I didn't like it at first.

However, after using the stick for about 15 minutes, I found it feels quite natural. The movement is very intuitive and easy, despite heavy springs and a very heavy base. I began to feel like my hand was in my plane controlling its movements.

Millenium 3D Inceptor

Manufacturer: Thrustmaster
Phone: 503-615-3200
Retail Price: $89.95
Highs: "Knuckle roll" execution is unique
Lows: "Knuckle roll" takes some getting used to

My Recommendations

For "no-brainer" programming and gameplay with multiple keystroke commands, go for the EagleMax. However, its light construction probably won't stand up to a major pounding. The EagleMax is a good controller for a less aggressive style.

If you are a serious flight-sim maniac who abuses your controllers, it will be a close call between the Logitech Extreme Digital and the Thrustmaster Millenium 3D Inceptor. Both are digital, solid, and made by companies with solid reputations. I liked the Thrustmaster programming software over Logitech's. If you play a lot of flight sims like *Red Baron II* or *Pro Pilot*, the choice would probably be the Extreme Digital due to the standard way the stick moves. If you can get used to the Millenium 3D "Knuckle Roll"—and I recommend you give it a try—then go with it for its natural feel, rudder control, and crisp response.

There you have it, my humble assessment of the joysticks that are out there today. Remember, they're your rubles...spend 'em wisely.

FEATURES

Joystick	Retail Price	Features	Functionality (Easy to Program?)	Flyability	Feel
EagleMax	$59.99	•••	•••	•••	••
Logitech Extreme Digital	$49.95	•••	•••	•••	•••
Thrustmaster Millenium	$89.95	••••	••••	••••	•••

••••Master blaster •••Does the job ••Adequate but lacking •Doorstop *You Have to get used to it first

Bill Knows Sticks

OK, I ADMIT it, I did look at one other joystick. However, I did not feel that it was fair to include it with the other contestants. I have seen the future, and it beats the snot out of me.

Sitting on my desk next to a puddle of drool is the Microsoft Sidewinder Force Feedback joystick. Flying will never be the same. It is difficult to describe what using Force Feedback is like. The best I can do is boil it down to three short sentences: It's real. It's smooth. It's quiet.

I have no doubt that the SWFF will be the heavy hitter in the force feedback battles that are sure to be waged in the very near future. I also believe soon you will see Force Feedback chairs, helmets, desks, shoes, and underwear. Watch for these Sierra titles and more that will support Force Feedback, and prepare yourself to be spoiled rotten:

Manufacturer: Microsoft
Phone: 800-426-9400
Retail Price: $159.95
Shipping: Late September

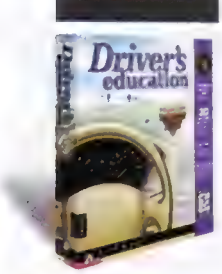
- *Trophy Bass 2* • *Trophy Rivers*
- *FPS: Skiing* • *EarthSiege 3*
- *Red Baron II* • *Sierra Pro Pilot*
- *Aces: X-Fighters*
- *Driver's Education '98*
- *SODA Off-Road Racing*

Taking a Turn at the Wheel

The ultimate driving simulation—Driver's Education '98 guarantees to help new drivers pass their written driving exam. Educated drivers are safe drivers.

Driver's Education '98

www.sierra.com/**driversed**



Preferred System Requirements
486/66Mhz, 8 MB RAM, WIN95

Format
WIN95 CD

Price
$39.95
(Order #83619)

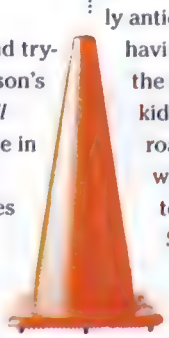
Available: Fall

1•800•757•7707

By David Senan

BLOWING AWAY HERCS and trying to hit Randy Johnson's fastball in *FPS: Baseball Pro '98* play an important purpose in life. Both are fun. But computers are more than mini-arcade engines with a monitor. They can also serve the noble purpose of educating and making information-gathering an interactive and exciting process. Bottom line: Computers make learning fun.

Executive producer and Dynamix co-founder Jeff Tunnell and designer Bill Money are currently working on a title that's going to change the way drivers everywhere (young and old) learn, comprehend and—most importantly—remember the rules of the road. It's called *Driver's Education '98*, and it's such a good idea, it's hard to believe no one's thought of it before.



Put the Pedal to the Metal

Sixteen-year-olds view getting their license as a rite of passage. They eagerly anticipate the sense of independence having a license offers. Parents, on the other hand, hope and pray their kids really learn the rules of the road before they get behind the wheel, and remember what it takes to be smart, defensive drivers.

Sierra is about to make this coming of age easier for everyone with *Driver's Education '98*. It's a comprehensive instructional aid for students who are studying for their driving test. It will help novice drivers learn the state rules and information necessary to pass their driving test—no matter what state they

As you enter the Virtual City, you drive with Driver Ed on a series of missions.

live in. Traffic laws for all 50 states (and the District of Columbia) are included, and it's completely customized by state. The folks at Sierra are so certain *Driver's Education '98* will help the driver-to-be pass his or her written driving test, they're even offering a money-back guarantee. A money-back guarantee that teenagers are going to pass a test? Where were these guys when I was in high school?

Back To School

Sierra's *Driver's Education '98* is actually two products in one. The first product within *Driver's Education '98* is the Driving Academy. It provides over 50 interactive lesson plans illustrated with diagrams, video segments, and demo maneuvers. It covers topics including driving preparation, defensive driving techniques, and common driving rules. The Driving Academy features customized lessons for each individual state. It also provides immediate feedback on each student's progress with quizzes on such topics as freeway driving, parallel parking, and accurately interpreting road signs. Students take a quiz over each section and must pass to move forward—tests are customized from over a thousand randomly generated questions.

The bird's-eye perspective allows you to see the entire car you are driving in.

Hit the Road, Jack

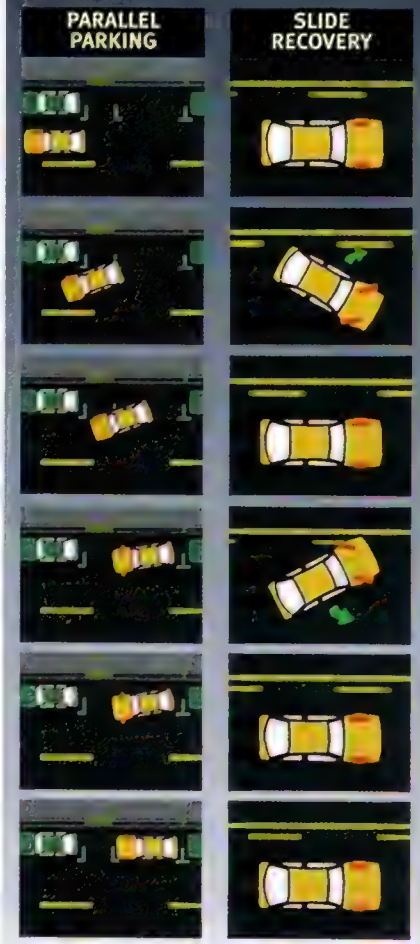
Once the written test is passed, the student receives his or her virtual permit. Now's the time for the student to put this newfound knowledge on the road with Driver Ed, their interactive driving instructor. Driver Ed offers advice and gauges the progress as the student jumps behind the wheel and moves on to *Driver's Education '98*'s second product, the Virtual City.

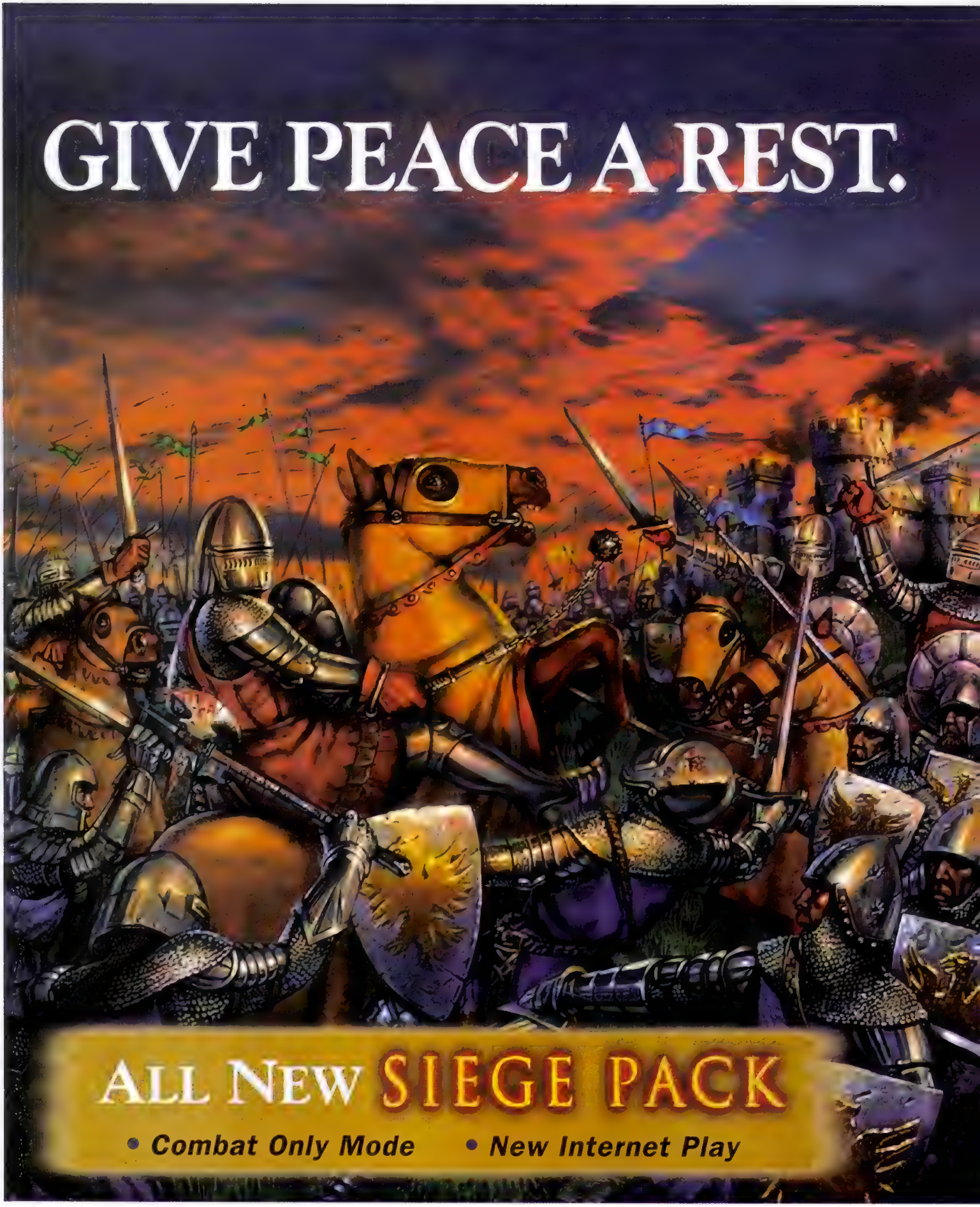
The Virtual City is where Sierra gets to flex some of its gaming muscle. Using advanced 3Space technology—the same 3D technology that fuels games like *Earthsiege 3* and *Mask of Eternity*, the developers have created a 360-degree, real-time virtual world of cars, buildings, and traffic signs. It accurately simulates urban and rural roadways while presenting random events with other vehicles that are guided by their own unique AIs. This adds to the realism of the Virtual City by confronting student drivers with emergency vehicles, slower-moving vehicles, and those ever so unpredictable...teenage drivers!

Driver's Education '98 isn't a game. It is a two-tier interactive educational tool that makes driving rules stick, because the learning process is fun and unique. Student drivers get an intuitive classroom tutorial that is designed (and guaranteed, no less) to help them pass their written driving test—no matter which state they live in. Once they've passed their written virtual driving test, student drivers get to hop behind the wheel and test their skills in the Virtual City under the watchful eye of their personal driving instructor, Driver Ed. Educational, yes; boring, no. Just because *Driver's Education '98* is a serious instructional tool doesn't mean it isn't fun. Sierra was determined to make this title, because so many teenage driver wannabes and their parents are counting on it to help create better, safer drivers on the nation's roads. To get even more information about *Driver's Education '98*, go to the Sierra website at **www.sierra.com/driversed/**.

INTERACTIVE DRIVING INSTRUCTIONS AND TIPS

The Driving Academy places new drivers in an interactive classroom. 50 lesson plans, completely customized by state, teach and quiz drivers on techniques from parallel parking to interpreting road signs, to recovering from accidental slides.





Download your free demo and custom Lords II theme pack from our Web site at http://www.sierra.com/games/lords2. Order your copy today by calling (800) 757-7707.

Impressions

Declare all-out war with the Lords of the Realm™ II Siege Pack. Now you can concentrate on just fighting – this is pure combat. Lead your armies into 50 new battle arenas which will test the mettle of the most seasoned war lord.

Enemy hosts await you for head-to-head combat on the Internet. Plus, new castles, battle maps and scenarios are ready to take you to the next level – putting you one bloodstained step closer to the English throne.

Choose to clash swords in the open field or lay siege to new castles with your customized army.

Battle friends and foes on the **Internet.**

Discover 20 **New Countries** to conquer.

Seige upon 10 new **Castle Designs.**

Repel invaders with new **Burning Pitch.**

Clash on 20 **new Battlefields.**

Create your own challenging battle-fields — dare players from around the world to play on your "home turf."

LORDS II is a

CG RATED

PC GAMER EDITORS' CHOICE

Coming this fall! Lords of Magic™

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Just Another Day in L.A.

SWAT 2

SWAT 2 designer Susan Frischer gives gamers an insider's look at the design and development of the upcoming action-packed police strategy game.

Police Quest: SWAT 2

www.sierra.com/**swat2**

Available: Holiday

Preferred System Requirements
Pentium 133+, 16 MB RAM, WIN95

Format
WIN95 CD

Price
$49.95
(Order #70310)

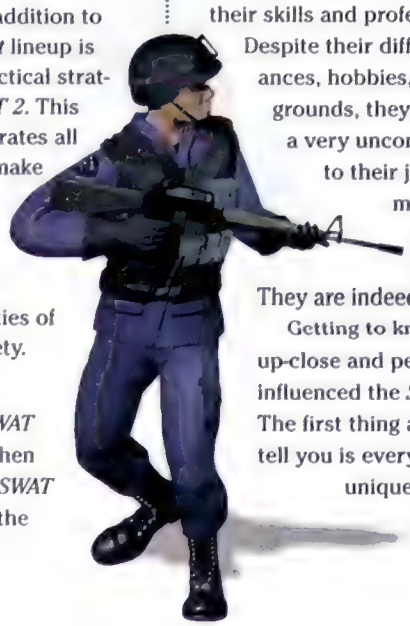
▷1•800•757•7707

By Susan Frischer

THE MOST RECENT addition to the *Police Quest* lineup is the real-time tactical strategy game, *SWAT 2*. This next incarnation incorporates all the characteristics that make a *Police Quest* game unique and exciting: realistic settings and true-to-life police tactics based on the harsh realities of our violent modern society.

Designer's Notes

Hi, I'm Susan Frischer, *SWAT 2*'s designer. Way back when I wrote the *Police Quest: SWAT* hint book, I interviewed the LAPD SWAT officers who served as the game's technical advisors. With surprising candor, they told me about the call-ups, the shootings, and the dark humor they develop as a necessary defense against the continual threat of violence that's part of the job. Growing up in LA, I read a lot of negative press about the LAPD, and probably some of it is true. However, after talking to these guys, I developed a great deal of respect for their skills and professionalism.



Despite their different appearances, hobbies, and backgrounds, they have in common a very uncommon devotion to their job, their teammates, and SWAT's life-preserving philosophy. They are indeed the Elite.

Getting to know these guys up-close and personal decidedly influenced the *SWAT 2* design. The first thing any officer will tell you is every operation is unique and unpredictable,

Bad Intersection: In Los Angeles, not all the potholes are caused by earthquakes.

Map Editor: It lets you engage in 15 SWAT or 15 terrorist missions or create your own.

demanding on-the-spot decision-making and an adaptable response. The second thing he'll tell you is many choices can result in a successful conclusion. The key is to select the best option for that particular scenario. During the debriefing session after every mission, the call-up is analyzed with 20/20 hindsight, mistakes are pinpointed, and improvements suggested. Everything I learned from the officers led me to the conclusion that flexibility must be an important element in gameplay. I want the player to make the same calls as a real SWAT commander, to pick from a wide variety of options, and then play out the consequences. The goal is to make the player's experience as close to reality as possible without sacrificing the ever-important fun factor.

So, player freedom is a top priority. Freedom to send your people anywhere at any time. Freedom to select and use any item in an expanded gear list that includes weapons, flashbangs, tear gas, and even bombs and grenades (if you're playing on the terrorist side, that is). Freedom to call in the crisis negotiation team (CNT), the SWAT helicopter or tank, K-9 units, and explosives experts. Anything a SWAT officer might face once during a 35-year career, the player will experience multiple times in *SWAT 2*.

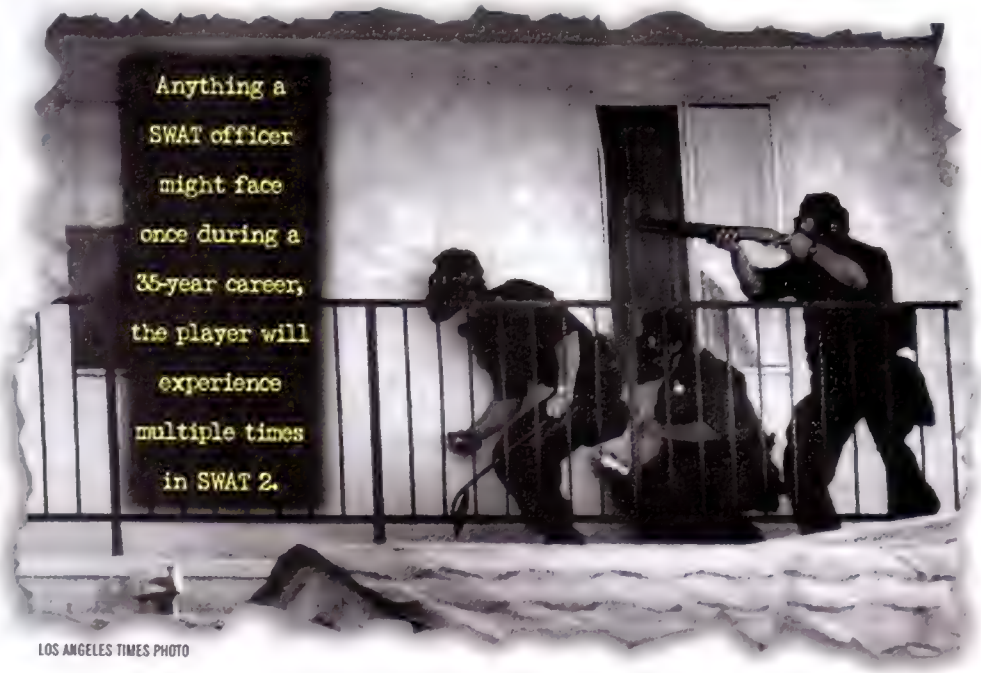
Former LA Police Chief Daryl Gates is continuing in his capacity as our content consultant. Because of his connections to the LAPD and international police agencies, we have direct access and a virtual letter of introduction to almost anyone in the law enforcement field. As the founder of the Special Weapons And Tactics platoon and a 43-year veteran of the LAPD, Chief Gates provides a unique perspective on SWAT's 30-year history. In addition, we'll be hitting him up for hints accessible during gameplay, as well as stories about the actual call-ups upon which the scenarios are based.

The Look

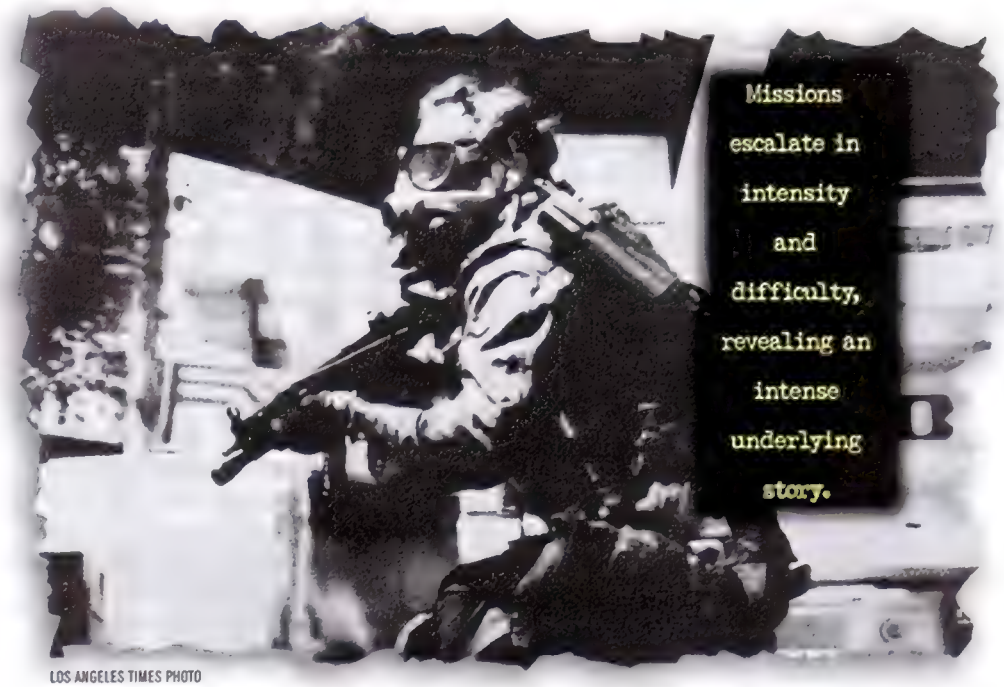
SWAT 2 takes place in a 3/4 perspective, top-down environment. The playing field is resizable, featuring smooth scrolling and zooming. Keeping player freedom in mind, our awesome lead programmer, Victor Sadauskas, is developing a real-time game engine. Victor says, "The challenge is to create a high-performance, feature-packed development system geared toward real-time strategy games. Using the latest technology, our highly talented programmers are creating an engine that will deliver a superior gaming experience."

We're building in multiplayer capabilities right from the start. Play over the modem as the good SWAT guy trying to defeat your buddy's evil terrorists, or team up against the computer. We're also providing a map editor so you can create your own scenarios and challenge your friends. Imagine ordering your SWAT team to create a diversion while your friend sneaks his team in through the back door. You and your fellow players come up with the plan, and then carry it out. It's entirely up to you whether or not to follow traditional SWAT procedures.

Our artists are going for an ultra-realistic look, incorporating all the grunge and filth of a typical LA day. The art



LOS ANGELES TIMES PHOTO



LOS ANGELES TIMES PHOTO

director, Mike Hutchison, says, "With *SWAT 2*, we're trying to bring a level of realism, detail, and variety to the backgrounds and animation that hasn't been seen before in a strategy game. The impression of 'real life' is crucial to the *SWAT* games, so in order to simulate what we all know—the real world—we need to include a wider variety of terrain, buildings, and props than you would usually find in a strategy game. This attention to real-world detail is what sets the look of *SWAT 2* apart from other games in the strategy genre."

Choose Sides

At the beginning of a new career, the player decides whether to take the side of SWAT or the terrorists. Each career consists of 15 missions played in chronological order. Locations range from city streets and buildings to rural areas like the Mojave Desert. As you play through the missions, they escalate in intensity and difficulty. And an underlying story emerges, connecting seemingly unrelated events. Play well, fight hard, and live up to SWAT's reputation as a life-preserving organization, and you'll be rewarded with more of the plot. Go in with guns blazing and you may make it through the mission, but you run the risk of destroying evidence and killing suspects who could have provided important clues.

To describe the interface in a bit more detail, the Chief control panel allows you to macro-manage the operation, recruit officers, communicate with the CNT, and position sniper teams, elements, and specialized units for deployment. You'll recruit your elements and sniper units from a pool of 120 LAPD officers who want to become members of the elite D Platoon. Among these officers, you'll find some familiar faces from *SWAT 1*, as well as a surprise appearance or two.

Once you decide you have the personnel needed for a particular operation, you'll call all the shots, ordering your officers to do stealth or dynamic entries, move strategically, provide cover, lob flashbangs, shoot tear gas, rescue hostages, and, last but not least, confront and neutralize suspects (yes, that means shoot them if necessary). You'll see the results of your actions, and no scenario is complete until the last threat is neutralized.

As a SWAT officer, you'll face psychos, criminals, and terrorists, each with his own deviant personality and arsenal of weapons. You'll defuse bombs, bust drug manufacturers, take out rooftop snipers, and quell riots. You'll be able to order officers to use any of the gear in their personal inventories: .45 caliber Colt, MP-5 submachine gun, Benelli 12-gauge shotgun, .308 sniper rifle and scope, flashbang, scout mirror, battering ram and explosives (for dynamic entries), rappel gear, tear gas launcher and canisters. When you play the terrorists, you'll have more exotic weapons,

YOUR MISSION: Defuse violent situations and insure the safety of innocent citizens.

CRIME CAN PAY: Play as the good guys or the criminals—the choice is yours.

including grenades, booby traps, time bombs, and rocket launchers.

What's So Cool About SWAT 2?

For a more objective viewpoint than a designer can provide, I asked our project manager, Oliver Brelsford, what he thinks is so special about our game. He said, "I think one of the best features of this game is the Initiate command. It's standard procedure on SWAT teams to use this command to set a plan into motion. In *SWAT 2*, if the Initiate button is locked down, officers will perform your commands immediately as in any real-time game. However, if the Initiate button is unlocked, officers will take orders but won't carry them out until you're ready. In this way each officer will simultaneously perform his or her preset commands in a smoothly coordinated effort. By basing gameplay on real-life SWAT tactics, we've solved a common problem in many real-time games where it's difficult to coordinate a multiple-unit attack."

On top of all that we're developing a brand-new artificial intelligence engine for *SWAT 2*. Each nonplayer character will react spontaneously to any given situation depending on his personality type and range of behaviors. These reactions will be dynamic and improvisational so even the same character can react differently under identical circumstances. This dynamic feedback creates unpredictable computer opponent actions as well as a unique game experience every time you play.

Playing on the side of the law, you'll come up against the wacko taking potshots at planes on the LAX runway, the guy holding his own daughter hostage, and die-hard terrorists with a secret agenda. Hostages might be passive or aggressive, posing almost as much of a threat as the armed suspect. There's even a chance a hostage could develop Stockholm syndrome, a documented condition in which a person in imminent danger forms an unnatural attachment to his captor and acts on his behalf.

Trendsetter in the Making

In a market already glutted with *Warcraft* and *Command & Conquer* clones, *SWAT 2* will be a trendsetter, not a wannabe. I've tried to design a game that combines the real-time urgency and excitement of an action game, the complexity and attention to detail of a strategy game, and the story and dialog of an adventure game. A tough order to be sure, but you *Police Quest* fans are a demanding bunch. Hopefully, we'll succeed in giving you exactly what you're looking for in this sequel: player freedom and involvement, action, suspense, and most of all...FUN! *SWAT 2:* The player is in charge. Look for it this November.

Tense situations can develop out of nowhere—don't get caught unaware.

Thanks, Chief

No member of the police force has ever gained as much notoriety as former LAPD Chief Daryl Gates. Over a 40-year law enforcement career, Gates has played a pivotal role in such incidents as the Watts riots, the shoot-out with the Black Panthers, the assassination of Senator Robert Kennedy, the Hillside Strangler, anti-terrorist security at the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles, and the high-profile Rodney King case. His aggressive style of policing combined with his strong opinions has made him no stranger to controversy.

Gates has given a lot to the law enforcement communities in the form of the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program. The DARE program, originated by Gates in 1983, is now in 52 percent of U.S. classrooms and is dedicated to eradicating substance abuse among children. Some may argue, however, Gates did the most for law enforcement by creating the first Special Weapons And Tactics (SWAT) teams. SWAT teams enter and try to defuse the most dangerous and volatile situations. Because of all his achievements with our nation's most effective police department and his dynamic personality, we are proud to work with Gates on our immensely popular *Police Quest: SWAT* series.

LOS ANGELES TIMES PHOTO

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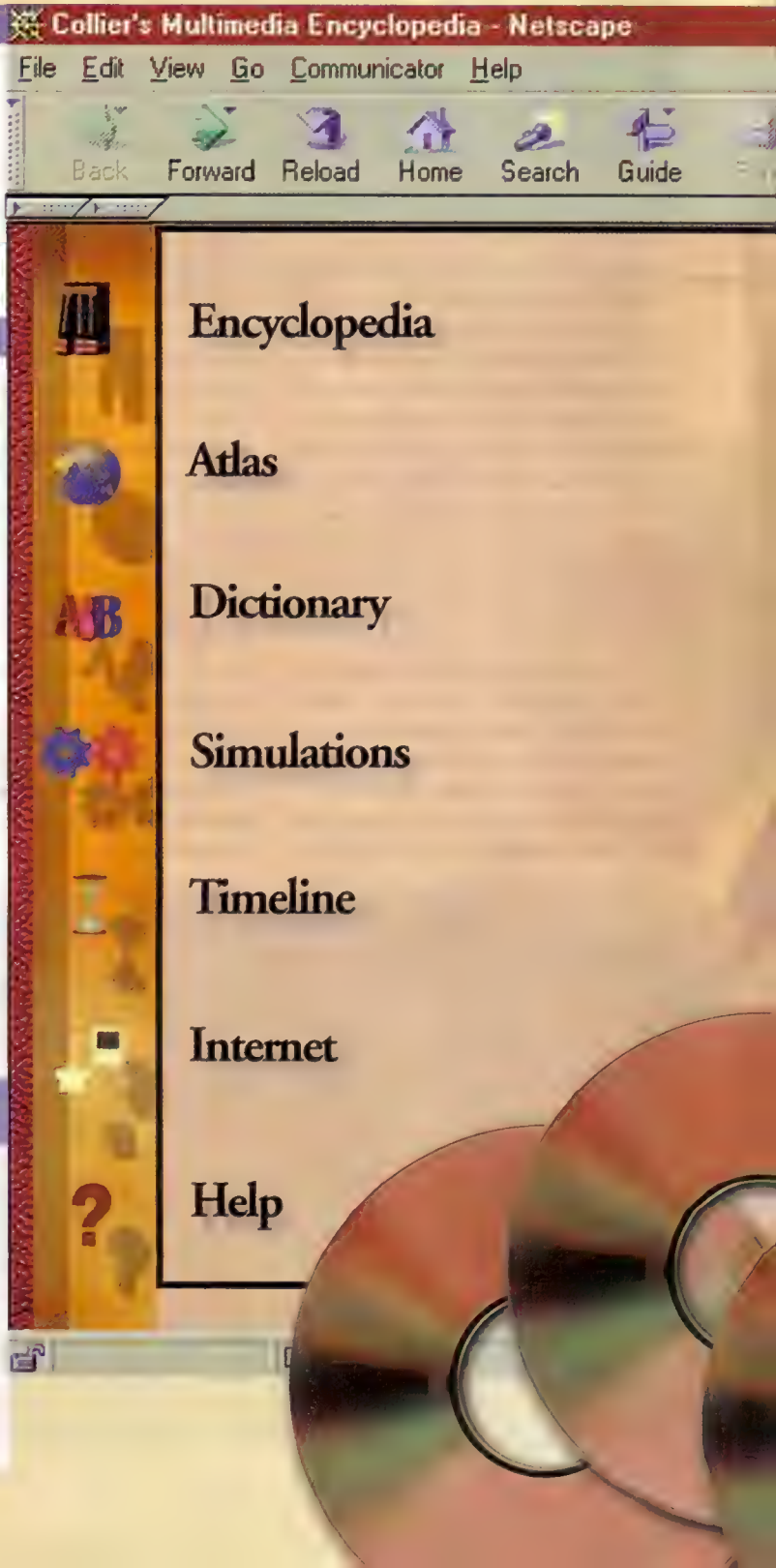

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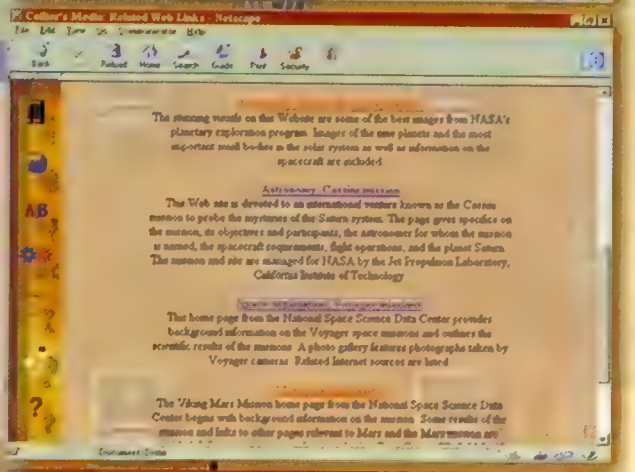

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DeAgostini-Rand McNally Ltd.

BACK BY popular demand

After years of letters, e-mail, and calls, rabid fans finally convinced Sierra to conclude the epic Quest for Glory series with QFG V: Dragon Fire.

Quest for Glory V: Dragon Fire

www.sierra.com/qg5

Available: Holiday

Preferred System Requirements
Pentium 90+, 16 MB RAM, WIN95 / Mac PPC, Sys 7.5, 16MB RAM, 4x CD-ROM

Format
WIN95/MAC (PPC) CD

Price
$49.95
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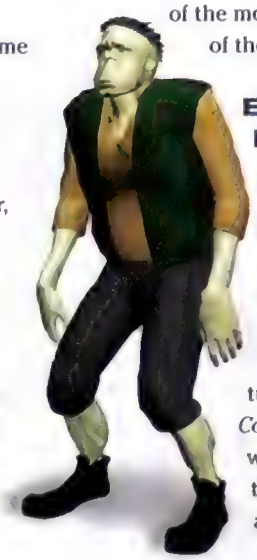
By Nancy King

BY THE TIME a game like *Quest for Glory V: Dragon Fire* makes it to your computer, you're playing a polished product with a solid marketing plan and full company support behind it. What you're not privy to is any of the tough and sometimes agonizing choices that have to be made, the dogged determination of thousands of fans, and the intense work it takes to actually produce a game that won't disappoint rabid fans who are hungry for another winner.

Well, in true *InterAction* style, we're giving you a rare inside peek at how *Dragon Fire* has made the journey from concept into full-tilt production. With an intended release date of Holiday 1997, *QFG* series fans across the U.S. and the world are gearing up for one of the most anticipated releases of the year.



Eight Years and Four Titles Later

In 1989, Lori and Corey Cole created for Sierra the first title in the new *QFG* series, *So You Want to Be a Hero*. Heralded as "a breakthrough in adventure game design" by *Compute* magazine, *QFG I* was the perfect combination of fantasy adventure and role-playing games.

Multiple camera views allow you to view the intricate details of the three-dimensional scenes in full panoramic splendor.

"We wanted to share the drama, the excitement, and the fun of being a real hero," explains *Dragon Fire* co-designer Lori Cole. *QFG I* was an immediate success. Fans were hooked. They eagerly awaited the release of the next three games, *Trial by Fire*, *Wages of War*, and *Shadows of Darkness*. What they didn't know was Sierra had decided to make *Shadows of Darkness* the last game in the series.

By the time *Shadows of Darkness* was released in 1993, the software industry and Sierra were going through some major changes. By March 1994, Sierra had moved its corporate offices up to Bellevue, Washington, and PCs were exploding with new technology. There were faster machines with greater memory, which opened up new avenues for designers and developers. Finally, technology was able to convert some of the more brilliant ideas coming from the imaginations of great storytellers (like Lori and Corey) into computer games. The gaming industry took a whole new direction. *Dragon Fire* just didn't make it on Sierra's list of future games.

Listening to Our Fans

End of story? Not quite. For the past two years, fans have persistently sent Ken Williams (Sierra co-founder) and Craig Alexander (general manager of Sierra Publishing in Oakhurst, California) e-mail and letters, and publicly pleaded with them through this publication, to resurrect the *QFG* series with one final game.

As Alexander puts it, "Interaction with Sierra's customers definitely has an impact on development decisions. *Dragon Fire* never would have happened had it not been for the thousands of fans demanding *Quest for Glory*'s return."

One example is fan Carl Rothman. He went so far as to say in his e-mail, "I have locked the door to my room, and I won't come out. The Internet is my only

connection to the outside world, and I won't come out of my room until *QFG V* comes out and my dad buys it for me!"

(Editor's Note: Hey, Carl! If a copy of this article reaches you in your self-imposed seclusion—it's OK to come out now.)

Getting Back to Work

The first thing Alexander did, after getting the green light from Ken Williams to produce this game, was contact the Coles. Over lunch he proposed the idea of creating one last *QFG* game. He told them the fans were clamoring for it.

"I also offered Lori a budget that surpassed all of the first four *QFG* games combined," Alexander explains. That immediately sold Lori on the idea, but unfortunately Corey had other commitments. "From the beginning our goal was to make *Dragon Fire* the pinnacle of this phenomenally successful series," Alexander stresses.

"When Craig approached me with the opportunity to make *Dragon Fire*, I was thrilled," Lori Cole says. "I really wanted to make this game since I started the series. From the beginning, these games had been designed like a book trilogy. The game story flows from one *Quest for Glory* to the next. You always play the same character, each time building his abilities and skills, making new friends and enemies, and developing the overall plot. We've taken the Hero from a beginning-level graduate of the Correspondence School for Heroes to a seasoned adventurer in the course of *Quest for Glory IV (Shadows of Darkness)*." One of the great things about this series is you don't have to start with game one. Each game is a self-contained story and you learn as you go. Novice players and die-hard gamers have found something to enjoy in each one, and it will be the same for *Dragon Fire*.

"This is a series, and along the way characters spoke of Silmaria and in the manuals we included Silmaria as an address," Lori continues. "Finally, in *Dragon Fire*, the hero has the opportunity to become King of Silmaria. This is a prize he deserves for all the good things he has done in the games and one he will certainly earn by the end of *Dragon Fire*. After all, how many times can one person save the world?"

Team Design

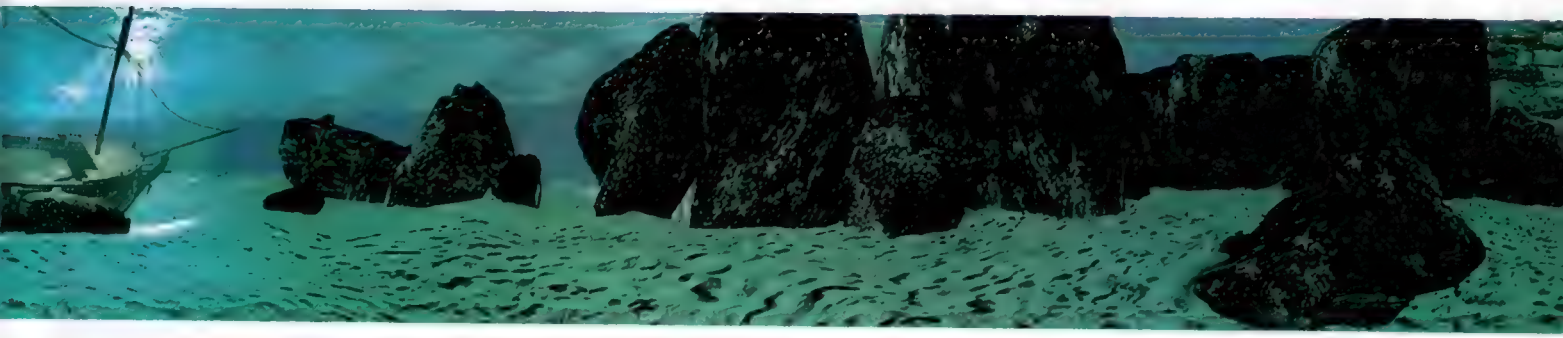
"Corey and I designed the first four games of the *Quest for Glory* series in solitude," Lori says. "We tried new things in each new game, and never knew whether they were good or bad ideas until afterward. From the beginning, our fans let us know what worked and what didn't work. So, the game series continually evolved but slowly and by trial and error.

"This time, we openly asked fans for ideas about what they wanted in *Dragon Fire*. *Quest for Glory* fans are great. They are all over the world, and they all care very much about what happens next in the series.

A Radical 360-Degree Change

The latest technology featured in *Dragon Fire* are voxels (short for volume pixels). The characters are created using voxels, which allows for an extremely high polygon count (for example, the hero in *Dragon Fire* alone uses 10,000 polygons). A little confused? That's OK. The voxels and polygon counts determine the complexity of the character's drawing and how realistic each one looks. Unlike traditional 2D characters, voxels have complete freedom of movement. They can be viewed from any direction (top, bottom, and 360 degrees around) and can be scaled large or small as they approach the camera. And all this means *Dragon Fire* is a game that's more fun to look at and play.

You embark on a quest which leads you on a path of entwined heroic feats.



They have e-mailed both me and Terry Robinson, my co-designer on this game, telling us what they like or dislike from what we have put up on the website. I've actually taken a character known as Punny Bones out of the game because of fan input. There were several negative comments, and I thought they were important enough to pull him, and I really like the character. I believe it's important to listen to what my fans have to say and try to satisfy them. Without fans, I wouldn't be working on *Dragon Fire*. Because of them, I can continue to create great games.

It's going to take all of your skill, wit, and ingenuity to make it past the guards.

"But that's not the end of Punny Bones," Lori continues. "We're planning an expansion CD for *Dragon Fire* (it should be released in 1998). Gamers will have to already own *Dragon Fire* to continue the story. It will have new adventures in the settings of Silmaria.

"If you win *Dragon Fire* and become king, you will play the expansion game as the king. If you married someone in *Dragon Fire*, you will have a wife in the expansion game. And I'm putting Punny Bones back in the expansion disk, because other fans have formed a Punny Bones fan club and, like me, really like the character."

Multiplayer Mayhem

Besides fan input, Lori Cole and Terry Robinson decided *Dragon Fire* had to be a multiplayer game. "Multiplayer mode is the future of computer games, and the future is now when you play *Dragon Fire*," Lori stresses. "Most computer games are very limited in their ability to let the player do things. They can only adapt so much to the player.

"That's not true with *Dragon Fire*. Every time you play the game with someone new, you have a totally different experience. So whether you play this game with a friend sitting in the same room with you with a second computer hooked up directly to yours, or play your pen pal from Portugal, *Dragon Fire* will be different every time," Lori states with a smile.

So, the last chapter is written in the popular *Quest for Glory* saga—a fitting conclusion to one of the most popular gaming software titles ever created. Because fans wouldn't settle for anything less and showed their support and loyalty with letters and e-mail, *Dragon Fire* became a game. This project wasn't without its share of headaches, trials, and tribulations. That's all part of the creative process. What's different about it is fans had a say in what it would be. It also opened a new avenue in the world of game design. Fan input before and during the process has changed how we do business—for the better.

Is QFG VI Next?

When asked about *QFG VI*, Lori was blunt. "I am certain that the fans will want another game in this series. However, I intend that the next series will start out with someone different.

"I've put some thought into it and I'm sure you will be able to have your choice of heroes. Maybe you'll play the son or daughter of the hero from *Dragon Fire*. Maybe you will play someone completely different, in an entirely new land with new skills and spells. I don't know right now, because I intend to let the fans determine the next path for the game. I'll let them contact me with their opinions on the matter, and we'll let them tell us what would be the most fun. All in all, the quest continues one way or another."

online design forum

Check out the *Quest for Glory V: Dragon Fire* online design forum at *www.sierra.com/qg5/*.

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By Jeff Gilbert

LIZARDS TO THE left! Raptors to the right! Raging rivers and wild waterfalls gush like busted fire hydrants all around your mosquito-ravaged ankles! And everywhere you turn you run the risk of stepping in market-fresh piles of dino doo. If your name is Rex Hunter, then it's just another day at the office, which just happens to be among the ruins of a lost temple buried Tarzan-deep in the jungle. And if that isn't enough, your co-workers are 10-ton prehistoric man-eaters who don't like you. Maybe it's time to ask the boss for a raise.

Dynamix, the wild bunch behind the insanely popular *3-D Ultra Pinball* series (*3-D Ultra Pinball, Creep Night*), has outdone themselves, this time melding the cliffhanging adventure of *Indiana Jones* with the digital dinosaur delights of *Jurassic Park* for their most engaging and compulsive-play pinball game yet.

3-D Ultra Pinball 3: The Lost Continent is bursting with standard-setting, highly detailed graphics: ancient crumbling temples, animated gargoyles, creaking wooden bridges, danger-infested jungles...heck, the

dinosaur eggs alone look real enough to eat. (What, no toast?) Throw in the ultra-smooth/ultra-fast gameplay (it's like driving an Indy 500 car on ice), and you have all the makings of an epic hit. Thank god, this thing doesn't need quarters. And would somebody please call Dynamix, and tell them to knock it off? I can't stop playing this game, and now my gums tilt if I brush my teeth too hard.

The Lost Continent is light-years beyond your garden-variety bump 'n' bash computer pinball games. There's a plot, actual characters, secrets to discover, and a quest to complete. As Rex, you're a bush pilot who's accidentally parked your plane in a jungle that has no runway or 7-Eleven. In other words, you've crashed and don't have the slightest clue where the heck you are. Neither do your guests, noted zoologist and inventor Professor Spector, and Mary, his able-bodied secretary who can type 65 words a minute, but has a little trouble out running a velociraptor. It doesn't take long for you to discover that you're trapped in some sort of time warp, a sort of T. Rex Twilight Zone. Your mission is to fend off attacks from human-hating reptiles, navigate through tricky terrain loaded with traps, ramps, and speed bumps, and get your heinie outta there before that scientific-looking cannon you're firing pinballs from runs out of ammunition.

Lost Continent **includes 15, that's right, 15 lightning-fast tables. From the makers of the most popular pinball series of all time.**

Practice, timing, a little luck, and the best ball physics in the business keep you moving to the next level–until T. Rex hunts you down.

Follow the complete scoring story of the game through rich 3D character animation.

That's the beauty of the *3-D Ultra Pinball* series—no other computer pinball game even comes close to its meticulous graphics, groundbreaking features, or brilliant innovations. If you can avoid being turned into brunch by a plesiosaur in the first five minutes, *The Lost Continent* sports a staggering 20 interlinking boards that impressively zap you between play tables—provided you strike the right sequence of shots. But if you're like me and couldn't hit the broad side of a brontosaurus, you'll spend a lot more time trying to find a way to cheat. While much can be said for triggered explosions and point-scoring mayhem, if you set up the correct string of shots, then cave doors mysteriously open, dense jungle foliage unfolds to reveal previously undiscovered pathways, and giant cranky beasts—in need of some decaf—are rudely awakened from their prehistoric slumber. And those dino eggs? Sure, they break open as easily as if they just fell from a shopping cart, but the problem is, you never know what kind of toothy beast is gonna pop out to defend them—especially when you help 'em hatch with a few good smacks.

Don't worry—there's plenty of moving targets to satisfy the flipper freak in all of us. Herds of rampaging compys dart across the playing field, frantically leaping over fallen logs and rocks as though being chased by Barney. When intercepted by a well-aimed ball, these agile creatures sound amazingly similar to someone stepping on a bag of potato chips—with army boots. The triceratops, on the other hand, is your friend. At least, that's what he wants you to think. Knock a ball his way, and chances are he'll head-butt it to a secret location to be used at a more opportune time—like when his buddy, the chompasaurus, comes out to play. He'd just as soon stomp on your head as block your shot that's aimed at knocking down the pillars holding his temple condo up.

In *The Lost Continent*, you're a pinball paleontologist: fast-fingered, fearless, and flashy. Your defense is pure reflex with just enough pinballs to keep that circling pterodactyl overhead from making a mockery of your just-washed car. Indiana Jones may have needed a bullwhip—all you'll need are flippers.

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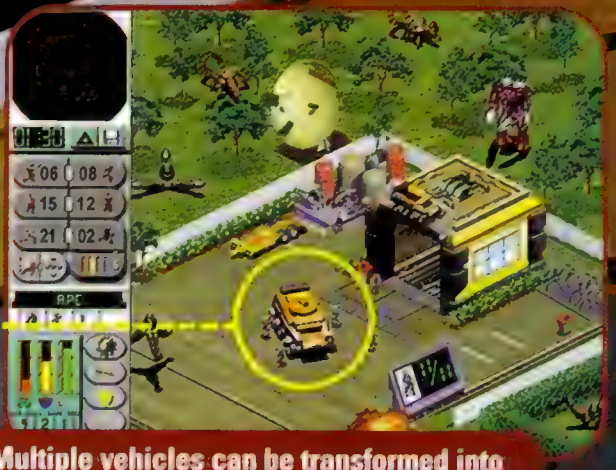

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OUTPOST 2

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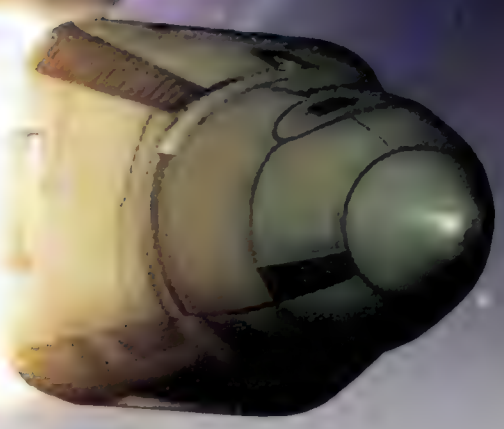

Outpost 2: Divided Destiny redefines strategy gaming by adding multiple layers of internal conflict.

Outpost 2: Divided Destiny

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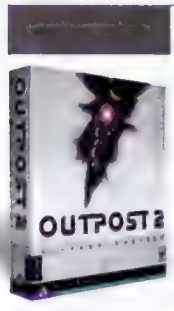

Available: Now

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Pentium 90+, 16 MB RAM, WIN95

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By Geoff Keighley

EVERY DAY, WE grow closer to learning more about our galactic surroundings. In early July, when the NASA Pathfinder spacecraft landed on Mars and delivered the first crystal-clear photos from the Red Planet, scientists heralded this event as a sign humans could travel to Mars as early as the year 2015. The question of what lies beyond our ozone-enclosed sphere fascinates everyone. In *Outpost 2: Divided Destiny*, you can explore your destiny in the stars—not in 2015, but right now on your desktop.

According to *Outpost* lore, in the near future an asteroid smashes into Earth and destroys it, prompting a group of humans to narrowly escape the planet and set up their own colony on a new sphere, New Terra. However, the questions that surround the evolution of

WARNING WARNING: Life Status–CRITICAL. Morale–CRITICAL. Evacuate NOW!

this society on New Terra echo similar questions being asked by scientists about Mars, namely "How will the human race evolve?" On New Terra, we learn that a splinter colony named Plymouth has started to try to live with the land, whereas the original colony, Eden, wants to start terraforming the land. Herein lies the conflict that hastens the adversarial battle.

The game's goal is not as linear as some real-time strategy titles where you siege and pillage an enemy base using blitzkrieg-esque attack patterns. Rather, the game continues the tradition of the original *Outpost* by trying to add a much more human and emotional element to the gameplay. Players deal with internal threats in their colony as well as external offensive attacks. But here, the entire concept of fluctuating colonist morale redefines strategy gaming by adding layers of internal conflict.

As such, the play style of *Outpost 2* requires new strategies and tactics unlike those needed for any other game. You'll wage war against threats such as vortexes, industrial accidents, and a low birthrate. All these topics are far from the frontlines of the battlefield but still extremely important to creating and evolving a new society.

Meet Your Space Elves

The campaign game includes 12 missions for each side of the conflict. Eden, whose strength is heavy destruction power, also has better research capacity and faster scientists than Plymouth, which has to rely on better morale and a few surprise weapons to keep the scales even in battle.

Colonists and their morale are very real variables that can have a dramatic effect on your game experience. For instance, if you destroy the enemy's nursery, resulting morale fluctuations need consideration. What will happen to the morale of your colonists when they find out you have just killed hundreds of babies? (Hint: Don't count on seeing high morale levels for a few weeks.) This entire new way of thinking for a strategy game helps separate this game from the rest of the genre.

Getting back to the colonists, they are divided into three classes—children, workers, and scientists, who all play a vital role in balancing the five keys to the game: construction, resources, combat, research, and development. Remember the morale of these

Today's Forecast–Showers: Meteor showers are one of the natural disasters you'll encounter.

Multiplayer vs. Mother Nature?

Armed Forces commanders often say that the most unpredictable enemy they battle is Mother Nature herself. *Outpost 2* pits you head to head with the elements of the most notorious enemy of them all: You must fend off natural disasters that could quickly destroy any colony. Threats in the game include realistic vortexes, seismic activity, meteorite impacts, and even volcanoes that erupt with flowing lava. The computer can often give you ample warning of disasters, depending on your level of research from the lab but, more importantly, hitting the SPACEBAR during emergency messages will immediately zoom-in on the affected area. Remember, you never know when Mother Nature might strike, so take a tip from the Boy Scouts and be prepared—for anything in the dynamic world of *Outpost 2: Divided Destiny*.

citizens has an effect on many parts of the game, including the birthrate, production rate at factories, and mortality rate. The biggest consideration throughout the game is to make sure you have enough qualified people to run the colony at all times. A worker shortage can be disastrous news to a colony. Of course, you can use scientists as substitutes, but they complain and pull down morale. Most players will want to research hypnopedia at the university as soon as possible to decrease the training time needed for scientists.

MAKE AN IDLED BUILDING LOOK FUNCTIONAL BY SHINING A VEHICLE'S LIGHTS ON IT TO DECEIVE ENEMIES.

Since research carries on from mission to mission, it is important to make sure you are always conducting research on a topic at the local lab. New technologies might not even be useful now, but remember that every leg up on the competition you can get could prove to be a trump card later.

MORE THAN JUST SANDY DESERTS

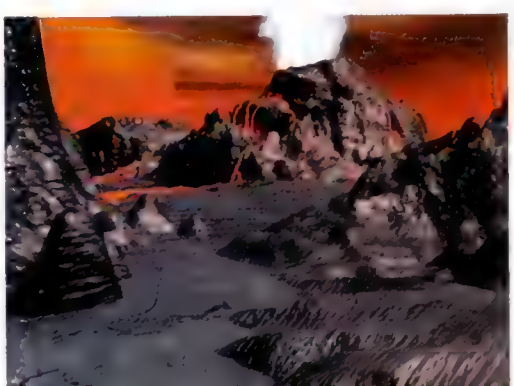
As you start to explore the planet, you discover a wide variety of terrain. The speed of vehicles actually varies according to the terrain, whether it is rocky, sandy, or even hardened lava. Group vehicles into three sections: wheeled, tracked, and legged. Through experimentation, it is easy to discover that wheeled vehicles, the most common, travel slowest on recent lava and fastest on bulldozed terrain.

The terrain dynamically changes, thanks to the addition of actual natural disasters in the environment. A volcano may erupt in the middle of your colony, destroying valuable resources, or an earthquake could easily wipe out a patrol unit. When playing the third mission on the Eden side of the game, players encounter an earthquake on the map. By planning and researching seismology at the lab, you will receive a 30-second warning of the quake's location, so you can idle buildings and remove vehicles.

MAKING THE CYBERCASH

Finding revenue for a new colony is obviously a major concern. Here, an intricate mining system can help defer the cost of new purchases. However, there's a twist: In the game the yield from mines actually varies from low to high and back down again, as the mine's resources are depleted by constant digging and transportation by cargo trucks. If you start out the game with a low-yield mine, the best things to build first are a university and an advanced lab to help gain technology. With a high-yield mine, the best options to create first are a vehicle factory and an extra ConVec to deploy structures. With so much metal in constant transit, use the waypoint system to set up direct routes to maximize efficiency.

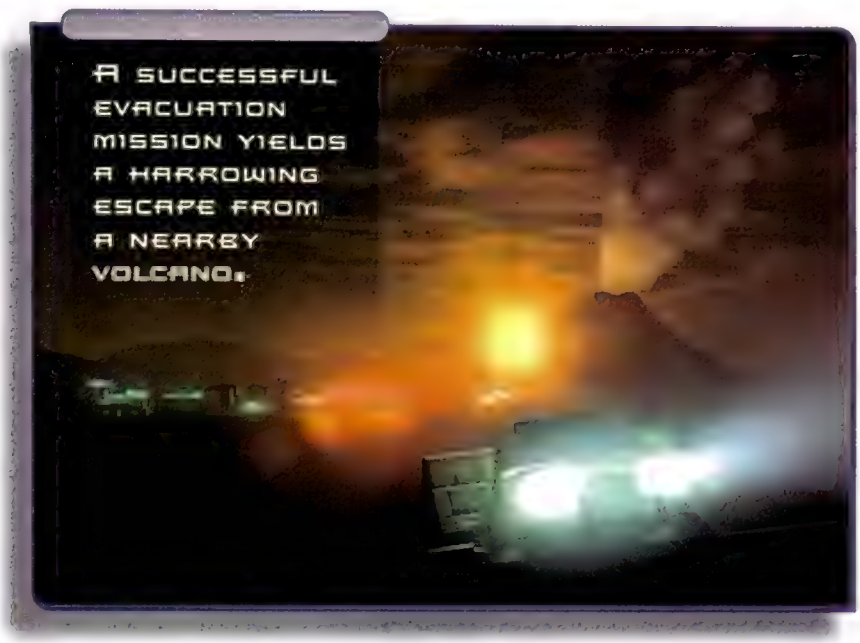
Power is also another major consideration for the colony, especially since it is a finite resource. On the "hard" dif-



GO WITH THE FLOW: Deadly volcanic eruptions can wipe out the entire colony.

MULTIPLAYER GAMES: Up to six people can battle at once using rail guns and microwave blasts.

ficulty setting for Eden, the first mission requires you to idle buildings, so a garage can come online and release vehicles trapped due to a power shortage. The power, beamed via microwave, can come from a number of plants, but be aware of the Tokamak. By using a fusion process, this plant is quick and efficient but, unfortunately, damage occurs over time due to wear and tear; it's in need of constant repair.



Of Light and Darkness

Further enhancing the dynamic universe, designers Patrick Cook and Allen McPheeters added dynamic "night" and "day" settings on the planet, which influence the fog-of-war—the visibility—on the map. All of the vehicles in the game come equipped with their own headlights that can aid in navigating dangerous terrain. Turn off the lights at any time to launch a sneak attack in the dark, but be aware vehicles travel at half speed in pitch-black darkness. Although idled buildings shut off their lights, one of the neatest tricks in the game involves making an idled building look functional by shining a vehicle's lights on it to deceive enemies.

You will get to kick the living daylights out of enemies later in the game when combat takes center stage. The essential strategy to remember is that you'll never be able to blitz a base and destroy everything in sight. Rather, strategically plan what to destroy and concentrate on one target at a time. Mission 9 on the Plymouth side asks you to venture into Eden's base and reclaim a piece of a spaceship. This mission also features Plymouth's secret weapon, the Spider, a legged warrior that can reprogram enemy units to fight for Plymouth. You have to send a Spider over to Eden, reprogram the cargo truck, and then quickly drive it back to your base.

The Battle Is Within Your Colony

With the emphasis on elements such as research and morale, as well as combat, *Outpost 2* is one of the most robust real-time strategy games. However, with this new lease on the genre, players need to take a much more defensive attitude with their strategy. What results from these new elements is a game that can be just as exciting as a tried-and-true pixel fireworks show between two enemies. However, the situations here are unique, and you have unprecedented control in battles against factors such as nature and even a terminal blight plague.

Outpost 2 offers 14 tutorial missions to guide players, in addition to hundreds of pages of online help and three difficulty settings. Moreover, the design of the game is a true precursor to a time when we might actually be able to live in space on our own colony, thanks to probes such as Pathfinder and Viking. Sierra's ability to effectively simulate a living, breathing, and working society is a coup for their programmers and a welcome gift to gamers who are looking for a strategy game that requires just as much calculated brainpower as adrenaline-induced brawn.

Money Doesn't Always Buy Happiness

THE INTERGALACTIC WORLD of *Outpost 2: Divided Destiny* adds a whole new dimension to the real-time strategy genre of gaming, thanks to innovative colony management options. Some games only require players to keep an eye on their virtual bank balance—here, you will have to keep an eye out for six different variables. If money is your only concern, you might just be filing for a reading of Chapter 11 of the manual in no time:

- COLONISTS: These are your most important asset; without people, the units and buildings are useless.
- MORALE: It can greatly affect the productivity of your colony. Many events have an influence on morale.
- FOOD: The availability of food directly correlates to the longevity of workers.
- POWER: This is the other requirement for operating structures, besides workers.
- COMMON METALS: These are the building blocks for all structures and vehicles.
- RARE METALS: Develop technology and eventually rare metals will help build more advanced structures.

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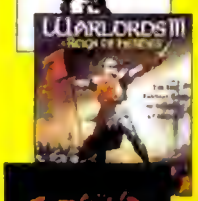
'LORDS OF MAGIC' In a fantasy world where magic is common, trouble lurks. Dark Lord Balkoth's giant war machine is wreaking havoc. You must stop his reign of terror, using real-time combat on true 3D terrain. Play alone or with 5 friends over a network or modem.
Sierra (Strategy)
Release Date: 10/97 PC CD $47

'WAR WIND II:HUMAN ONSLAUGHT' A greater variety of vehicular, mechanized and assault units with special abilities, 4 campaign options, 46 scenarios. Multiple leaders with varying strengths add to strategic challenge.
Mindscape (Strategy)
Release Date: 11/97 PC CD $34

'BIRTHRIGHT' Over a hundred unique, 3D-modeled, animated characters. 16 different battlefields on four types of terrain, 25 massive adventures. 17 choices of realms to rule, each with varied holdings, military strength, religions, merchant guilds, magic Sources, treasures, political climates, allies, and enemies,
Sierra (Strategy)
Release Date: NOW PC CD $29

'STARCRAFT' You must gather your resources to accomplish your goals, either freedom or galactic domination. Play 30 different missions in space, on planets, within installations. Scenario and map editor allows you to create your own campaigns.
Blizzard (Strategy)
Release Date: NOW PC CD $47

'WARLORDS 3' A medieval fantasy setting forms the backdrop for a struggle among barbaric hordes. Random map generation makes every battle a fresh new conflict. Multiple terrains, animated graphics and over 80 types of heroes, creatures and warriors.
Broderbund (Strategy)
Release Date: NOW PC CD $45



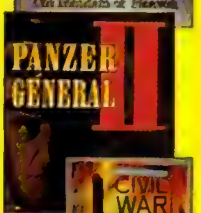
'DIABLO' Explore a 3D world of dark gothic fantasy. Develop your character's skills, attributes, and spells as you explore the dungeon labyrinth. Discover weapons, armor, and magical treasures. Built in support for Battle.net, as well as modem, serial, and network play.
Blizzard (Roleplaying)
Release Date: NOW PC CD $37

'QUEST FOR GLORY 5: DRAGON'S FIRE' Select the character of your choice, customize your skills and abilities, and embark on your adventure in the beautifully rendered 3D landscape. Story line changes with the choices you make. Single player with Multiplayer Internet option.
Sierra (Roleplaying)
Release Date: 12/97 PC CD $48

'LANDS OF LORE II' You are Luther, cursed son of the Sorceress of Darkness, exploring treacherous lands in search of ancient magic, a super power that will release you from your vile birthright.
Virgin (Roleplaying)
Release Date: 08/97 PC CD $48

'MIGHT & MAGIC VI' The Mandate of Heaven, the newest M & M edition contains an integral time clock with multiple plots and story lines. Unique 'skill based' character development and over 1000 miles of virtual terrain!
3DO/New World (Role Playing)
Release Date: 11/97 PC CD $49

'PANZER GENERAL II' contains enhanced multimedia footage and scenario briefings. Also, all new campaigns, play some from the Allied side. New interactive terrain reflects battle damage. Multiplayer support.
SSI (War)
Release Date: NOW PC CD $42



'CIVIL WAR GENERALS' The Battle of the Blue and Grey is bigger, better and bolder. Multiple campaigns covering battles from both the Eastern and Western Theaters are included in this sequel to the highly acclaimed Robert E. Lee:Civil War General. Internet and LAN Support.
Sierra (War)
Release Date: NOW PC CD $48

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INTMAGF97P2

WebTrek

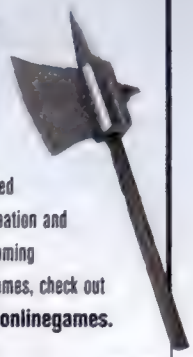
By Beth Demetrescu

Internet Play Everyone Can Afford

For players who love head-to-head Internet gaming, Sierra recently debuted the first of a new line of games designed to

www.sierra.com/onlinegames

be played on the Internet only. Two of Sierra's most popular games, ***Lords of The Realm II*** and ***Front Page Sports Golf***, are now available in multiplayer-only versions at the special introductory price of only $14.95.



These are full-featured CD-ROM-based products—not cut-down versions of the boxed products. For more information and to order on Sierra's coming selection of online games, check out **www.sierra.com/onlinegames.**

Lately, all of our webmonkeys, excuse me, I mean webmasters, can be found chained to their Macs, twitching, with Mountain Dew cans towering over their desks. These poor kids have been working day and night to get our revamped website live. I figured since they've put so much time and energy into this reconstructive surgery, I may as well take a bit of a tour. I also thought, since it is so new and some people haven't gotten a chance to explore it, I would tell you about my merry jaunt. So, fire up your computer, and you can follow along. ¶

The first thing I noticed about our site is that we have moved on to using frames, and judging from the buzz around the office, we are pretty excited about it. Of course, there are a few troglodytes out there who fear frames. However, the vast majority of our Web users find it to be considerably more intuitive, easier to navigate, and much more interactive. At any time, from virtually any page, you can access any of our titles by category or A–Z lists. You can also browse our online store, search the webpages, check out the InterestLinker,

Latest and the Greatest from Sierra

Here at Sierra, we are never stagnant. Therefore, neither is our website. We are constantly updating information and adding new pages. The following are some of our most popular new and updated pages. Enjoy!

New Stuff
www.sierra.com/new
Updated weekly, this is the place to go for News, Contests, and Sierra Store Specials.

Shivers Two
www.sierra.com/shivers2
Complete with goodies ranging from tips and humorous outtakes, this page is definitely one to visit.

MiniGolf
www.sierra.com/minigolf
This page gives you a glimpse into both the front and back nine holes of this wacky game.

Betrayal in Antara
www.sierra.com/antara
Download a great theme pack while learning more about this intriguing new release.

YOU DON'T KNOW JACK Sports
www.sierra.com/trivia
Find out how you can play this hilarious hybrid of sports and pop culture.

Quest For Glory V: Dragon Fire
www.sierra.com/qg5
Sample the score from this exciting upcoming release.

Leisure Suit Larry 7: Love for Sail!
www.sierra.com/lsl7
You'll laff and laff as you go through this page.

3-D Ultra Pinball 3: The Lost Continent
www.sierra.com/3dupb3
Check out this pinball adventure, where you have to solve the mysteries of the strange lost world and make your way back to civilization.

Phantasmagoria 2: Puzzle of Flesh
www.sierra.com/phantas2
Pick up some hints and background story. It may keep you alive.

Lords of the Realm II
www.sierra.com/lords2
With incredible replayability and the newly released *Siege Pack, Lords II* propels you into the heart of 13th-century battle.

It's FREE!

Some people say there is no such thing as free. Well, as far as we are concerned, they are wrong! We make a point of offering tons of playable demos, screensavers, and other extras for free–all you have to do is download them. So, here you go...the Top 10 most popular downloads of the summer from **www.sierra.com/free**.

YOU DON'T KNOW JACK The Netshow
Requirements: 486/66, Win95, 8MB RAM or PowerMac, 16MB RAM
Test your trivial knowledge.

Betrayal at Krondor
Requirements: DOS
Download this complete version of the 1994 Game of the Year.

Sierra Diving Adventure Screen Saver
Requirements: Win95, Direct X, 8MB RAM
Swim with the fishes, but watch out for sharks!

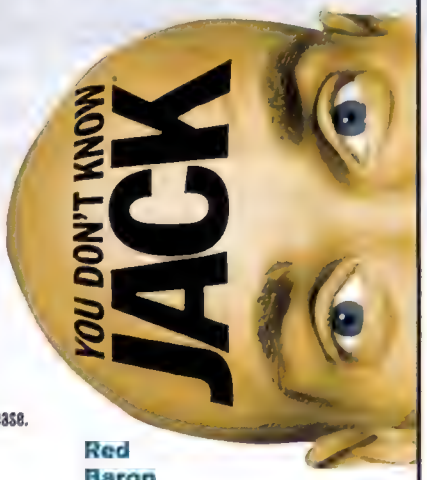
3-D Ultra MiniGolf Demo
Requirements: Win95, Direct X, 8MB RAM
Feel free to putt around on these three holes.

Betrayal in Antara Demo
Requirements: Windows
Take a peek at this popular new release.

NASCAR 2 Demo
Requirements: Pentium, 16MB RAM
Hop in, and take a ride!

The Realm Demo
Requirements: 486/100, Windows, 12MB RAM, Modem, Internet connection
Experience this online adventure for yourself.

Johnny Castaway Screen Saver
Requirements: Windows
You asked for it, so here it is.



Red Baron
Requirements: DOS
Fly the most popular WWI sim of all time!

Lords of the Realm II Demo
Requirements: Win95, Direct X
Check out our hot new medieval strategy game.

and more. ¶ So, after poking around on the front page, I decided to jump right in. From the list of game genres on the side of my screen, I chose the Fantasy and Adventure category. I was after something in particular, so I scrolled through the list of games. Since I spent so much time on The Realm while writing about it, I thought I would check out what was new on its website. As usual, I was not disappointed. With all the changes *The Realm* has been experiencing, this website has some good information. ¶ I noticed on *The Realm* website there were several invitations to download a demo. I have to confess, I have been to this webpage a lot, so I knew it would be a good first stop. In the name of fairness, I felt I should go next to a page I had not been to before.

The Realm Explodes

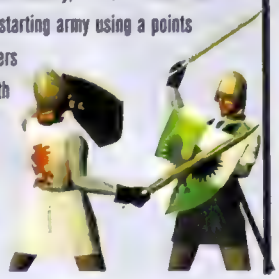
Sierra's multiplayer world of ***The Realm*** has undergone a major upgrade. With seven new towns, several dungeons, and the introduction of deserts and swamp regions, *The Grand Realm* now has well over 6,000 screens for you to explore. The availability of 24 unique character classes, combined with new weapons/armor and other options, yields literally trillions of possible characters for you to adventure with. The combat system has been restructured, making it more balanced. Within this new system, there are many new spells and magical items, as well as the ability to summon creatures into combat to aid you in your battles. You can even design your own spells. *The Realm* also now has a complete quest generator, so you can look forward to plenty of unique action and role-playing fun.

www.sierra.com/realm

Fight Your Way to the Crown

Hold on to your helmets, because medieval conquest just got a lot tougher. Sierra just released the ***Siege Pack*** for ***Lords of the Realm II***. With 20 new scenarios and an equal number of new battle maps, this expansion pack lets you test your mettle in pure medieval battles in head-to-head Internet combat. The *Siege Pack* showcases a new battle mode that allows you to play multiplayer sieges or battles without having to play the full conquest game. Additionally, it has a feature that lets you choose your starting army using a points system and tells players how good they are with a scoring/ranking mechanism. Now you can focus your efforts on fighting, and only fighting.

www.sierra.com/siege



Although I am not a huge strategy player, I picked the **Lords of the Realm II Siege Pack** page. Again, the site was filled with helpful information about the more aggressive artificial intelligence and enhanced Internet play this addition brings to the game. ¶

It was at about this time that I realized how well the Sierra site is set up. I know I am biased, but it's true. Whether you are the type to check out everything that catches your attention or someone who is researching a specific topic, this site is set up to accommodate you. Personally, I found it quite convenient to have the game categories on the left and general options (Products, New Stuff, Interact, Sierra Info, and Support) on the top. So when I wanted to take a completely different turn, like from the *Lords of the Realm II Siege Pack* page to the **Trouble Shooting Guides** (under the Support option), it was right at my fingertips. ¶ Also under the Support option you

Solve All Your Gaming Problems

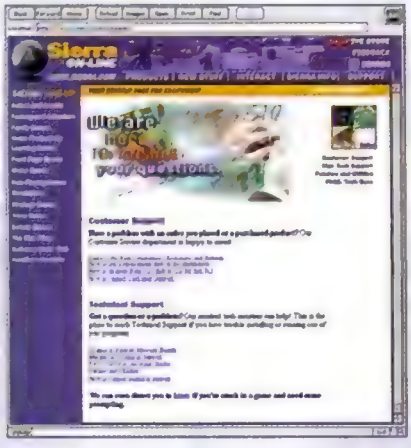
Can't get your steering wheel to calibrate correctly for *IndyCar II*? Printing problems with *Print Artist 3.0*? Trouble getting into multiplayer mode on *Trophy Bass 2*? These are just a few of the common questions you'll find answers to when you access the new **Tech Support FAQ**. FAQ stands for Frequently Asked Questions, and we've compiled the most-asked questions from every Sierra game and productivity product in this comprehensive mini-site on the SierraWeb.

More importantly, we've also provided the answers to these questions, and we've done it in an easy-to-follow, step-by-step format that you can access at the press of a button and browse any time of day or night. This troubleshooting tool is available 24 hours a day and you can print out the information you need for reference instead of trying to make adjustments while you juggle the phone in one hand and type on the other.

www.sierra.com/support

In addition to Sierra-specific questions, the Technical Support Department has also written several valuable troubleshooting guides for common Windows 3.x and Windows 95 issues, and even included links to patch libraries. Literally hundreds of pages of information can be found, and all of it is arranged in a manner that makes it easy to get to the solutions you need.

You'll find the Tech Support FAQ at **www.sierra.com/support**. Give it a try next time you need help with your PC.



Updates! Updates! Get Your Updates!

Some think that once a game is released, our developers never think of it again. Well, they're wrong, and here's why. We have just made available two updates—one for ***Front Page Sports: Golf*** and the other for ***Print Artist***—in response to user feedback. The *Golf* update addresses ball/club alignment issues by improving ball physics and caddy intelligence, as well as issues surrounding where the ball lands during remote games and overall stability.

www.sierra.com/support/technical

The *Print Artist* update handles printing issues with Avery labels and greeting cards. It also has new categories for JPEG graphics, updated Help files, and TWAIN updates so you can scan images from within *Print Artist*. The metric rulers are also now able to use standard paper sizes.

When you go to the update page, be sure to download our new Autoupdate, which automatically downloads and implements any updates that are released for products you have loaded on your computer.

can find **updates.** These are designed to correct specific problems and change the actual product to work better under certain hardware or software configurations, or to fix problems found on certain systems. Some of them also provide additional features not available in the original program. Wouldn't it be nice if there was a utility you could run at any time that would check your system for Sierra products, go out to the Internet, see if there are any available new updates, and automatically download and apply them? Pretty cool idea, eh? Well, it's real. Check out Autoupdate and download your own copy today. ¶ I decided, since I have several of Sierra's games designed to accommodate Internet play, I would check out our gaming center. Right now, you can play over SIGS (Sierra Internet Gaming System) with anyone who has the same game as you. We are currently developing an online environment that incorporates SIGS, *NASCAR*, *Front Page Sports*, *Hoyle*, and *YOU DON' T KNOW JACK* *Online* into one super gaming site, **GameFrontier.** In time, we plan to add games from companies other than the above-mentioned to make GameFrontier as complete a gamers playground as possible. So be sure to check **www.sierra.com** frequently, 'cause you never know what you'll find next.

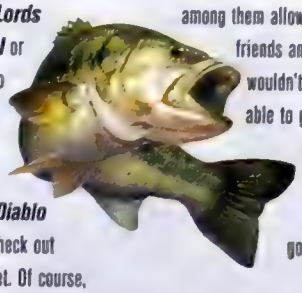
www.netmarket.com

You may have noticed that our fearless leader, Ken Williams, doesn't share his Inside View in this issue of *InterAction*. That's because all of his time lately has been focused on the launch of netMarket, a membership-based, value-oriented consumer site that offers undeniable savings on a broad range of products and services.

netMarket, which went live in mid-July, is the online offshoot of Sierra's parent company, CUC International. At netMarket, consumers are able to purchase a wide selection of products ranging from consumer electronics and travel packages, to compact discs and books. Anyone can shop at netMarket, but members receive special discounts, privileges, and cash back on special purchases. To see what has been keeping Ken so busy lately, go to **www.netmarket.com**.

Gaming: The New Frontier

If you want to play games over the Internet, you have several choices. If you want to play ***Lords of the Realm II*** or ***Trophy Bass***, go to SIGS (Sierra Internet Gaming System). If you are interested in ***Diablo*** and ***StarCraft***, check out Blizzard's BattleNet. Of course, **www.bezerk.com** is where to find Berkeley's *YOU DON'T KNOW JACK*, ***the Netshow***. All of the online gaming sites are great. Hopping among them allows you to play against friends and foes alike, but wouldn't it be great to be able to go one place and find all of these games and more? Well, that's what you're gonna get!



GameFrontier is designed to be the ultimate one-stop gamer site. You will be able to go to the GameFrontier site and, for any product you have with Internet capabilities, set up a networking game. When you wish to switch to a different game, simply quit the one you're in and select the new one you want to play. Keep checking **www.sierra.com** for updated details on GameFrontier.

TOP TEN x2

1 NASCAR Racing 2

"Right now, it's the best racing game available on the PC." –*PC Magazine*

"The latest version of *NASCAR* roars ahead of other racing simulations." –*HomePC*

2 Lords of the Realm II

"*Lords of the Realm II* is fun, fast, and easy to learn but still challenging enough to keep strategy gamers occupied for many hours." ★★★★ –*Computer Gaming World*

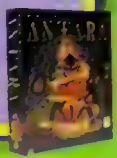
3 Print Artist 4.0

Named one of *Family PC*'s Top 50 Products

"New projects, new artwork, and better tools made this home publishing program a top pick two years running." –*Family PC*

4 Betrayal in Antara

"Betrayal in Antara offers possibly one of the heaviest, most detailed backplots of any RPG to come on the scene in a long time." –*GameSpot*



5 3-D Ultra Pinball

"So intricately designed that it'll keep you entertained for weeks." –*CD-ROM Today*

6 Trophy Bass 2

"For you new digital anglers, *Trophy Bass 2* is by far the best bass fishing sim on the market. ...those who want to sink their hooks into some down-and-dirty, realistic fishing action will find the game a perfect fit." –*GameSpot*

7 3-D Ultra MiniGolf

"*3-D Ultra MiniGolf* is the best darn miniature golf game out on the market....This game is a ton of fun and a must-play for anybody interested in golf." –*Game of the Month.com*

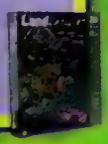
8 Hoyle Casino

"Sierra's *Hoyle* series features the most entertaining PC card play on the market." –*PC Magazine*

9 LandDesigner 4.0

"Editor's Choice" –*Home PC*

"If you love having a beautifully landscaped yard...this program will do everything for you—except dig the holes." –*Home Office Computing*



10 MasterCook Deluxe 4.0

"★★★★" –*Family Computing*

"There are other recipe programs out there, but the "MasterCook" series really takes the cake." –*Narragansett Times*

11 Phantasmagoria 2: A Puzzle of Flesh

"*Puzzle of Flesh* is the most satisfyingly macabre software in years ...a dead-on horror story... a psychological horror..." –*Fort Worth Star-Telegram*

12 3-D Ultra Pinball: Creepnight

"*Creepnight* is a pure and simple hoot, a computer creation that no earthly pinball machine can match..." –*Fortune*

13 Caesar II

"...by far the best thing Impressions has ever done, and is the best strategy game-builder since *SimCity 2000*." –*Strategy Plus*

14 Robert E. Lee: Civil War General

"The game's stunning graphics will appeal to strategy fans, while Civil War buffs will love the attention to detail." –*PC World*

15 Leisure Suit Larry: Love for Sail!

"With the colorful new graphics and animations...and all the extra goodies, it's Larry Laffer's greatest adventure yet." –*Online Gaming Review*

16 Shivers Two

"*Shivers Two* is a dark mystery, and one that challenges on many different levels. It is exquisitely designed and wonderfully full of all the right touches. 8.7 out of 10." –*GameSpot*

17 Time Warp of Dr. Brain

"...weirdly hip (in its own educational, nonviolent sort of way), and...caters to younger gamers without insulting their intelligence." –*Family PC*

18 Cooking Light 4.0

"...it does everything you would want a cooking program to do, and some things I wouldn't have thought of." –*Atlanta Constitution*

19 Power Chess

"The visual display and her (Power Chess Queen) explanations are the most down-to-earth and user-friendly I've seen. If you play chess for fun, this is the program to get!" –*Christian Science Monitor*

20 FPS: Football Pro '97

"The '97 version continues the winning ways of its predecessors with a slew of revolutionary changes." –*PC Games*

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LORDS™ OF MAGIC

LORDS OF MAGIC™

8 Magical races

When the evil sorcerer Balkoth threatens the peaceful people of Urak with death and destruction, brave heroes with magical powers must rise up to stop the reign of terror and defeat the forces of tyranny. In Lords of Magic, the successor to the popular Lords of the Realm II, you enter a fantasy world where good and evil fight for primacy against a mystical backdrop of wizards, warriors, spells and storms, giants, gnomes, and Barbarians.

3-D Terrain Editor

Building on the dramatic features that made Lords of the Realm II a break-through in strategy gaming, Lords of Magic combines turn-based exploration and resource management with real-time combat. Join forces with others (up to six players can compete on a LAN or over the Internet) or marshal your forces to take on Balkoth and his Barbarian allies alone. You'll command up to Eighty creatures, including elves, vampires, skeletons, and gargoyles, as you defeat evil and save the realm. Wielding the forces of magic through spells and artifacts of power, you can take multiple paths to victory: more choices, more outcomes, and unlimited replayability.

Lords of Magic features a true 3-D game map, with 16 bit SVGA Graphics and a powerful map editor that puts you in control of terrain height, topography, and texture.

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Impressions

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See page 51 for details

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